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THE GREAT

Neceſſity and Advantage
O F
PUBLICK PRAYER
A N D
FREQUENT COMMUNION;
Designed to Revive
PRIMITIVE PIETY:

W I T H
Meditations, Ejaculations and Prayers, *before, at,*
and *after* the Sacrament.

The SIXTH EDITION.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
WILLIAM BEVERIDGE,
Late Lord Biſhop of S. *ASAPH.*



L O N D O N :

Printed for W. TAYLOR, at the *Ship* in *Fater-noſter-row*

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The PREFACE.

THE Two following Treatises, on the Two great *Devotional Duties*, want no Name or Authority to set them off, whilst they bear that Venerable one of Bishop *Beveridge* in the Front.

It must not, therefore, be thought the Business of this short Introduction, to press the Frequency of *Public Prayers*, or *Communion*, either as Necessary or Advantageous to Christians, when they have been so effectually recommended to the World by that eminent Prelate from Pulpit and Press, both elsewhere in the *Vulgar Tongue*. *Codex Can. Vind. Lib. 2. cap. 3. Lib. 3. cap. 10.*

WHAT is thus prefaced, in short, is only to remind the Reader, that the Pious Author confirm'd by his Practice, what he establish'd by his Preaching: And that from the Time he was constituted *Parish-Priest*, in a * Place * *S. Peter, Cornhil.* capable of such Improvement, till, by the good Providence of GOD, he was advanced to a higher Station in the Church; 'twas the Desire, and Delight of his Soul, to render his Congregation a Pattern to others, for their stedfast Continuance in the *Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, in breaking of Bread, and of Prayer.*

“How happy, said he, (upon his Entrance on this good Work) should I think myself, if it would please GOD to make me, the unworthiest of His Servants, an Instrument in His Almighty Hand, towards the Effecting of it in this Place?” But his Endeavours stopp'd not there: For, besides the Example he hath given in singular Instances of Fidelity and Diligence in his Holy Calling, (which, we trust in GOD, will be influential on many of the Clergy in this City and Kingdom, who shall be industrious to revive, amongst us, *Primitive Piety*, and *Purity*, truly so called;) he left the main of his Estate, at his Decease, for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Promoting of Christian Knowledge, in this Manner, at Home, as well as Abroad.

The P R E F A C E.

To the *Curacy* of *Mount-Sorrel*, in particular, and *Vicarage* of *Barrow* in the County of *Leicester*, in a thankful Remembrance of *God's* Mercies vouchsafed to him thereabouts, he bequeaths a plentiful Accession for ever, on Condition that *Prayers* be read *Morning* and *Evening* every Day, according to the *Liturgy* of the *Church* of *England*, in the *Chapel*, and *Parish-Church* afore said; with a certain Sum, to be divided equally upon the *Eve* of our blessed Saviour's *Nativity*, among Six poor House-keepers of *Barrow*, as the *Minister* and *Church-Wardens* should agree; Regard being had especially to those who had been most constantly at *Prayers* and at the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper* the foregoing Years. "And if it shall so happen, (which *GOD* forbid!) that the Common Prayer cannot be read in the Church or Chapel

* See the "afore said, my Will is, (saith this good Will. "Father of our Church *) That what should have been given in either Place for that, be in each Place allowed to one, chosen by the Vicar of Barrow, to teach School, and instruct the Youth in the Principles of the Christian Religion, according to the Doctrine of the Church of England."

Go thou, Reader, and do likewise, as thy Circumstances will permit.

If thou art sent a *Preacher* into the Church of *God*, see that no Man despise thee, or the Offerings of the Lord, by thy careless Neglect, or superficial Performance of these Duties. Be instant in Season, and out of Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, and be a shining Example, that thou lose none of the Souls committed to thy Charge.

If otherwise, tho' thou shouldest even occupy the Place of the Unlearned in the Church, thou may'st yet gain some to *CHRIST*, by putting this Little Book into the Hands of many, according to thy Ability.

AND the Blessing of *God*, of His Spouse the Church, and of the Souls that are ready to perish for Want of this Spiritual Food, be upon Thee, and Thine!

N. B. The Additional Devotions. Use them, or others, already prepared for thee: But, as thou valuest thy Soul, be persuaded, by the Book, to be a constant Communicant.

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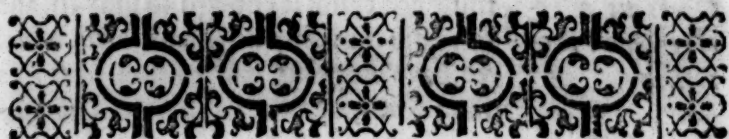
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THE





THE GREAT
Necessity and Advantage
OF
Publick Prayer.

A C T S iii. 1.

Now Peter and John went up together into the Temple, at the Hour of Prayer, being the Ninth Hour.



FROM your Presence here at this Time and Place dedicated to the Service of the Most High GOD, I cannot but in Charity conclude, *Prayer an Acknowledgment of our dependence upon God.* that you all believe that he governs the World, and disposes of all things in it, according to his own Will and Pleasure: That it is in him you live, and move, and have your Being: That you neither have, nor can have any thing but what you receive from him, and that you are therefore come hither now on purpose to acknowledge his Goodness to you in what you have, and to pray unto him for what ye want. And verily ye do well to take all the Opportunities that ye can get to do so; for this is the way to continue in his Love and Favour, and to live always under his Care and Protection. But for that purpose ye
B. ~~must~~

Gives us a Title to God's Protection.

must not think it enough to pray to, and to praise him only now and then, when ye have nothing else to do; but this should be your daily Business, the constant Employment of your Lives: He himself commands you by his Apostle, *To pray without ceasing,* 1 Thes. v. 17. and *to pray always, or at all times, with*

Ought to be constant.

all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and to watch thereunto with all Perseverance, Eph. vi. 18. Not as if ye should do nothing else but pray;

but that Prayer should run through, and accompany every thing else ye do, so as to begin, continue, and end all your Actions with praying to, and praising God for his Direction and Assistance; though not always with your Mouths, yet howsoever in your Hearts, by

Either Vocal or Mental.

lifting them up unto him, as any Man may do in midst of other Business. Thus David praised God seven times a Day. *Seven times a day do I praise*

thee, saith he, *because of thy righteous judgments,* Psal. cxix. 164. Not that he never did it oftner, but this was the least he ever did it. For being a Man after God's own Heart, his Heart was always running upon God, and praying to him; and that too, not only in his Mind, but with his Mouth also. *I will bless the Lord,* saith he, *at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth,* Psal. xxxiv. 1. *And my Tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long,* xxxv. 28. Thus all that would live a truly Pious and Divine Life, must keep their Hearts always fix'd upon God, admiring his Goodness, magnifying his Power, and imploring his Grace and Mercy, not only every Day, but every Hour of the Day, at all Times, upon all Occasions that offer themselves, as some or other do continually.

Not only constant, but regular.

But besides our thus praying to, and praising God in the midst of other Business, we ought to set apart some certain Times in every Day wholly for this. The Saints of old used to do it three times a Day,



Day, as we learn from *Daniel*. For when King *Darius* had signed the Decree, That whosoever should ask a Petition of any God or Man for thirty days, except of the King, should be cast into the Den of Lions, it is written, That when *Daniel* knew that the Decree was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his Chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks unto his God, as he did aforetime, *Dan. vi. 10.* As he did aforetime; which shews that this had been his constant Practice before, and he would not leave it off now, though he was sure to be cast into the Den of Lions for it. But what times of the Day these were, which were anciently devoted to this religious purpose, we may best gather from King *David*, where he saith, Evening, and Morning, and at Noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my Voice, *Psal. lv. 17.* He begins with the Evening, because Day Noon especially, then began, according to the Jewish Ac-

count; but he observ'd all these Times of Prayer alike. And so questionless did other devout People as well as he. The *Jews* have a Tradition that those Times were ordained to that Use, the Morning by *Abraham*, Noon by *Isaac*, and Evening by *Jacob*. But whether they have any ground for that or no, be sure this Custom is so Reasonable and Pious, that the Church of Christ took it up and observ'd it all along from the very beginning. Only to distinguish these times more exactly, the Christians called them (as the *Jews* had done before) by the Name of the *Third*, the *Sixth* and the *Ninth* Hours. Of which *Tertullian* saith, *Tres istas horas ut insigniores in rebus humanis, ita & solenniiores fuisse in orationibus divinis*, as they were more famous than others in Human Affairs, so they were more solemn in Divine Prayers. *Tertul de Fejun. c. 10.*

I know the Primitive Christians The Primitive performed their Private Devotions at Christians made other times as well as these; but at frequent Prayers these set times every day, especially in private

at the *Third* and *Ninth* Hours, they always performed them *publickly*, if they could get an Opportunity. And

In Publick had their Morning and Evening Service at our 9 and 3. their 3d and 9th Hours.

if we would be such Christians as they were, we must follow their pious Example in this, as well as in other things. This therefore is that, which, by God's Assistance, I would now persuade you all to, and for that purpose have chose these Words for the Subject of my present Discourse, as setting before you the Example of two of Christ's

own Apostles in it, *St. Peter*, and *St. John*, of whom it is here said, *That they went up together into the Temple at the Hour of Prayer, being the Ninth Hour.*

The Holy Spirit of God, by his *Amanuensis* *St. Luke*, is here about to describe a great Miracle wrought upon a Man who was above forty Years old, and had been Lame from his Mother's Womb, whom *St. Peter* made perfectly sound and whole, only by saying, *In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.* And he begins it with telling us, *That Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the Hour of Prayer.* But what is this to the purpose? Would it not have been sufficient to have described this as he usually doth other Miracles, without such minute Circumstances of Time and Place? Yes certainly it would have been so. And therefore I can see no reason why this should be recorded, but only to teach us, that though the *Levitical* Law expired together with our Saviour, yet the publick Worship of God ought to be kept up at certain Times and Places, set apart for it.

Publick Worship frequented by the First and beloved Disciples.

For here we see two great Apostles, the one called the *First*, the other the *Beloved Disciple*; these two, when endued with a more than ordinary Measure of the Holy Ghost, did not think it enough to pray at home, or together with their Brethren in any *Private* House; but they went to the Place that was dedicated to the *publick* Worship of God, and at the time when that Worship was

was then performed. And this is left upon Record, that Christians of all Ages may know it, and learn by their Apostolical Example to lay hold on all Opportunities they can get of performing their *publick Devotions* to Almighty God in such Places, and at such Times as are appointed for that purpose.

At the established Time and Place.

For our better Understanding of this, we shall consider two things: First, the *Place* whither these Apostles went, they went *up to the Temple*; and then the *Time* when, they went *at the Hour of Prayer*, being the *Ninth Hour*.

First, they went up into the *Temple*, εἰς τὸ ἱερόν to the *Holy Place*, as the Word signifies, to the Place dedicated to *Holy Uses*, to the Service of the most *Holy God*. Such Places God always had upon Earth, and he always look'd upon them as his own in a peculiar manner. Though *the Earth* be *the Lord's*, and *the Fulness thereof*, or, every thing that is in it: Yet when any part of it is solemnly devoted to him, and to the Worship of his *Holy Name*; he takes possession of it for himself, as he did in a visible manner, both of the *Tabernacle* and *Temple*.

The places of God's Worship Holy, whether Tabernacle, Temple, Church or Chapel.

And from that time forward, he hath a new kind of Propriety in such Places, distinct from that which he had before, and reckons them his *own* in a more special Sense than other Places are. He himself, as well as others, call them his; As where he saith, *In that ye have brought into my Sanctuary Strangers uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my Sanctuary to pollute it, even my House*, Ezek. xlv. 7. *My House shall be called an House of Prayer*, Isa. lvi. 7. And so he frequently saith, *That this House was called by his Name, or his Name was called upon in it*, as Jer. vii. 10. xi. 14. And in all Places thus dedicated to him, and called by his

Because they are God's Houses.

Houses of Prayer,

Name, he himself hath promised that he will be present in a special manner to bestow his Blessings upon those who there sincerely call upon him. In

And of Blessing. all places, saith he, *where I record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee*, Exod. xx. 24. The truth of which Promise

GOD's faithful People have had Experience of in all Ages: And therefore always accounted it to be their Interest as well as Duty, to frequent such Places as often as they could. As we see in *David*, a Man after GOD's own Heart. What Pleasure did he

take in going to the *House of GOD*? *God's House* zealously lov'd I was glad, saith he, *when they said and frequented unto me, Let us go into the House of the Lord*, Psal. cxxii. 1. How happy did he esteem those who could be always

there? *Blessed is the Man*, said he to GOD, *whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts, he shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy House, even of thy Holy Temple*, Psal. lxxv. 4. How doth he long to communicate with them in it? *How amiable*, saith he, *are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God*, Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. How doth he envy the very Birds that come into the *House of God*, when he himself, being then in Exile, could not; *Yea, the Sparrow*, saith he, *hath found her a House, and the Swallow a Nest, where she may lay her young, even thine Altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God*, v. 3. How doth he prefer this before all the Pleasures of the World besides. *For a day in thy Courts*, saith he, *is better than a thousand: I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of wickedness*, v. 10. There are many such places in the *Psalms*, which shew the great Love and Honour he had for the House of GOD, and the extraordinary Comfort and Delight that he used to find there.

Thus also *Daniel*, when he was at *Babylon*, although the House of God was then destroyed, and not yet rebuilt, yet in his daily Devotions he opened the Windows of his Chamber toward Jerusalem, *Dan. vi. 10.* that he might look at least towards the Place where the House of God once stood, and so expressed his earnest Desire to Worship God there, and his Faith in the Promises which God had made to those who did so, and by that means, when he could not possibly do it any other way, he made his private Devotions in a manner publick, joining in his Soul with the whole Church of God in his publick Worship, when he could not do it in his Body.

The Prophet Daniel.

But not to mention any more of the many Instances of this kind in the Old Testament, in the New it is written, That Anna the Prophetess departed not from the Temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day, *Luke ii. 37.* It is written, That Old Simeon, that Just and Devout Man, came by the Spirit into the Temple v. 27. It is written, That Jesus himself went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying unto them, It is written, my House is the House of Prayer, but ye have made it a den of Thieves. And he taught daily in the Temple, *Luke xix. 45, 46, 47.*

Anna the Prophetess.

Just and Devout Simeon.

The Blessed Jesus.

It is written, That when they had seen Christ ascend to Heaven, they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great Joy, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God, *Luke xxiv. 52, 53.* It is written of all the Disciples, That they continuing daily in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. *Acts ii. 46, 47.*

All the Disciples.

It

It is written particularly of *St. Paul*,
St. Paul. *That when he was come to Jerusalem,*
even while he was praying in the Tem-
ple, he was in a Trance, Acts xxii. 17. And it is
St. Peter and written here of *St. Peter and St. John,*
St. John. *That they went up together into the*
Temple at the Hour of Prayer.

But wherefore are these things written, but for our
 Admonition; to teach us, that it is

These Exam- God's Will and Pleasure that we
ples are an Ad- should perform publick Devotions to
monition to us him, in Places dedicated to his Ser-
to love, and vice, and set apart wholly for that
frequent our purpose. Such as the Temple was at
Churches. Jerusalem, which therefore was cal-
 led a House of Prayer by God him-
 self, Isa. lvi. 7. Luke xix. 46. *Yea, his House of Prayer.*

And I will make them joyful, saith he, in my House of
Prayer, Isa. lvi. 7. which plainly shews, both that Prayer
 was the most proper Work of that House, and also
 that House the most proper Place for Prayer; as be-
 ing his own House, where he himself was pleased in
 a more especial manner to reside, and

The Houses of to distribute his Blessings among those
God's special who there prayed unto him for them.
Residence. Hence whatsoever was done in this

House, is said to be done before God, as
 there specially present, Eccl. v. 1, 2. Jer. vii. 10, &c.
 And when our Blessed Lord in his Infancy was brought
 to the Temple, it is said, *They brought him thither to*
present him to the Lord, Luke ii. 22. Where we may

observe by the way, that this one
 Place of Scripture duly considered
 would be sufficient to perswade all
 Christian Parents to have their Chil-
 dren baptized, not in their own, but

in God's House, that they may be there presented to
 the Lord, as Christ was, and so receive his Blessing, ac-
 cording to the Prayers which are there made for them
 in God's own House, in his House of Prayer, where he
 himself

himself hath promised to meet with them, and to bless them, *Exod. xx. 24.* By vertue of which Promise the People of God in all Ages have found their common and publick Prayers to be the most effectual.

There they have greater *Assistances* of God's Holy Spirit, stronger Assurances of his Love and Favour to them, a clearer Sight of his Glory and Goodness, and a deeper Sense of his special Presence

Where the faithful are assisted.

with them, grounded upon their Belief of that remarkable Saying of our Blessed Saviour, *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them, Matt. xviii. 20.* He doth not only promise that he will be *there*, but he positively asserts, that he will be *there*, in the midst of them; which they who meet together in his Name, cannot but believe, with such a Faith, as is the Evidence of things not seen, *Heb. xi. 1.* and therefore by it they see him there, as really as they see themselves, or one another. And this is that which makes them so desirous of being in such Places, as we see in David, saying, *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my Soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth after thee in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is, to see thy Power and thy Glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary, Pſal. lxiii. 1, 2.* It seems he had seen God in the Sanctuary, or Holy Place before, and therefore longs to go thither again, not doubting but if he was there, he should see God again, as he used to do. And so do all his faithful People. They see him there by Faith in his Word; they see him by the Light of his Countenance, which he lifts up there upon them: They see him shining forth in his Glory, and manifesting himself and his Goodness to them in hearing the Prayers, and accepting the Praises they offer to him in his Name, who is in the midst of them, and hath promised, that *whatsoever they shall ask the Father in his Name, he will give it, John xvi. 23.*

And their Services accepted.

These

These things, I confess, may seem strange to some, especially to such as have not made trial of them; but they who have accustomed themselves to perform their *publick* Devotions to Almighty God, with that Intention of Mind, with that Earnestness of Desire, with that Faith, with that Reverence and Humility as they ought; they know that all which I have said comes far short of what they sometimes experience. Be sure, it was not for nothing, that the Apostles in my Text went up to the *Temple at the Hour of Prayer* to pray there. As all the devout People that dwelt thereabout were wont to do: and they also that would but seem to be so; as appears from our Saviour's Parable, where he saith, *Two Men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican*, Luke xviii. 10. For this shews, that not only they, but Christ himself, esteemed *that* the most proper place for Prayer.

The Tabernacle, Temple, and Synagogues heretofore, as Churches or Chapels now, the most proper Places for Prayers.

I say *the most*, not the *only proper* Place. It was at the *Temple* only, that all the Sacrifices were offered, which typified and represented the Death of Christ, by whom alone our Prayers are heard, and our Duties accepted. And therefore that was the most proper Place for all that liv'd near it, and could go thither to perform their daily Devotions, because there they had the most sensible Occasions given for the Exercise of their Faith in Christ, there typically represented before their Eyes, as Dying for their Sins, and as making Intercession for them, with the Incense of his own Merits. But nevertheless there were many *other* Places appointed for *publick* Prayers, which were called *Synagogues*. There were reckoned at one time above four Hundred in *Jerusalem* it self, and several others in every City of *Judaea*, and wheresoever else any *Jews* dwelt; so that in every Place where there were *Ten* considerable *Jews* together, they were bound to have a *Synagogue*; which were therefore as so many Parish Churches, belonging to the *Temple*, as the
Cathedral;

Cathedral; or rather they were as our *Chapels of Ease*, to the *Mother-Church*. For as there are many *Parishes* in *England*, where there are several *Chapels of Ease*, where People may perform their *publick Prayers*, but they are bound to go to the *Mother-Church* to receive the Holy Sacrament: So notwithstanding the many *Synagogues* which they had in all the Parts of their Kingdom, the *Jews* were to offer their Sacrifices only at the *Temple*. And therefore that was properly the *Metropolitcal*, or *Mother Church*: And all the *Synagogues*, far and near, were Members of that; and as such, were *Houses of God*, and *Houses of Prayer*, as that was: And the Prayers which were made in *them* were as acceptable to *God*, as those which were made in the *Temple* it self.

There were such Places as these in *David's* time: For he speaking Prophetically of the Destruction of that Nation, saith, *They have burnt up all the Synagogues, or Houses of God in the Land*, Psal. lxxiv. 8. To the same purpose is that of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *He hath violently taken away his Tabernacle, as if it were a Garden; he hath destroyed his places of the Assembly*, Lam. ii. 6. In both which places we see *God's Propriety* asserted in these *Synagogues*, as well as in the *Temple*. They are called the *Houses of God*, and his *Places of Assembly*. The Original Word in both places is מִיעָר, the same that is used for the *Tabernacle* of the *Congregation*, or the *Tabernacle of Meeting*, as the Word signifies, so called, not only because the People met there, but chiefly because *God met* there with the People, as *God* himself assures us; saying, *In the Tabernacle of the Congregation, or Meeting, where I will meet with thee*, Exod. xxx. 36. vid. Chap. xxv. 22. Chap. xxix. 42. From whence it appears, that these *Synagogues* also, as called by the same Name, were Places where *God met* with his People, and bestowed his *Blessings* upon them. And that is the Reason that the Prophets complain so much of this, as one of the greatest Calamities that could befall a Nation, that the *Houses of God* should be burned and destroyed; so that they had no such

such Publick and Solemn Places left, where they could meet with him. Hence also it was, that the *Jews* esteem'd the Building of a *Synagogue*, to be so good a Work, and so great a Kindness to them, as appears from their Elders, commending the Centurion to our Saviour, as a Person worthy of his Favour upon that Account; for, say they, *He loveth our Nation, and he hath built us a Synagogue*, Luke vii. 5. And hence, lastly, it is, that we so often read in the *Gospels* and *Acts* of the Apostles, that Christ himself, and his Apostles, went as constantly into the *Synagogues*, when they were in the Country, as they went to the *Temple*, when they were at *Jerusalem*: Those being the most proper Places, not only for Prayer, but likewise for the preaching and hearing God's Holy Word, which was read in the *Synagogue* every Sabbath-day, Acts xv.

21.

These things I thought good to put you in mind of at this time, that you might know how great a Value the Church and People of God, in ancient times, set upon Places devoted to him, and might learn from thence to do so too: For our *Churches* now are as solemnly dedicated to the Service of God, and therefore are as much his Houses, his Houses of Prayer, as ever the Jewish *Synagogues* were, or the *Temple* it self. The very Name of *Church* in Greek, from whence it comes, signifies the Lord's House. And it cannot be imagin'd by any Christian, but that God

*The Word
Church signify-
ing the Lord's
House.*

hath as much Propriety in, and as much Respect unto his Houses now as he ever had. It is true, we have not such Sacrifices offered in our *Churches*,

as were in the *Temple*; but we have one, which answers the Ends of all these Sacrifices, and far exceeds them all together, even the *Sacrament* of the Lord's Supper, instituted and celebrated in memory of the Death of the Lamb of God, which by the legal Sacrifices was only fore-shew'd, and typify'd. And whereas then Sacrifices were offered only in one Place, at the *Temple* in *Jerusalem*, not in any of their *Synagogues*:

The

The Holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood is administered, not only in our *Cathedrals*, but in all *Parish-Churches*. And it being only by virtue of that Blood which was only *typified* in theirs, but is *commemorated* in our Churches, that our Prayers are heard, our Services accepted, or any of God's Promises are ever fulfilled to us; we cannot doubt but that all the Promises which he made of *meeting*, and *blessing* his People in such Places, were intended for, and belong to us, and to our Churches, as the two great Apostles did to the Temple at the Hour of Prayer.

And that is the other thing which I promised to consider in these Words, the time when these Apostles went up together into the Temple, they went at the Hour of prayer, being the ninth Hour: that is, at three a Clock in the Afternoon: For the Jews divided the Day from Sun-rising to Sun-setting into Twelve hours, John xi. 9. and

Hours of Prayer amongst the Jews, were our 9 and 3, their third and ninth hours.

therefore according to their Account, the time of the Sun's rising about Six a Clock was their first Hour: their third Hour was our Nine a clock in the Morning, and their Ninth our Third in the Afternoon. And these two last, even the Third and the Ninth Hours, or according to our Account, Nine in the Morning, and Three in the Afternoon, were their constant Hours of Prayer every Day in the Year. But to understand how they came to be so, we must first observe, that in the Old Law God commanded two Lambs to be offered upon the Altar every Day, as a continual Burnt-Offering: The one Lamb, saith he, thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other Lamb thou shalt offer at evening, Ex. xxix. 39. Numb. xxviii. 4. or as it is in the Hebrew בין הערבים between the two Evenings, or about the midst between Noon and Sun-set, which was, according to their Reckoning, the Ninth Hour. This we may learn from Josephus, the best Jewish Writer that is extant, where he saith, that the solemn Sacrifices were offered twice a day, πρῶτον τε καὶ δεύτερον

ἐν αὐτῇ ὥρᾳ, in the Morning, and at the ninth Hour, *Josephus, Antiq. l. 14. c. 8.* And so the *Talmudists* tell us, that the Daily Evening Sacrifice was killed at half an Hour past *Eight*, and offered upon the Altar after *Nine*. These, therefore, were the two set Hours for the continual Burnt-offerings every Day; *Three* in the Morning, which is our *Nine*, and *Nine* which is our *Three* in the Afternoon.

These two Hours being appointed by God himself for the *Daily Sacrifice*, there was doubt-

Because the bloody Sacrifices were then offered as Types of the Lamb of God, whose Sufferings began and ended with these Hours.

less great reason for it, which seems to be this: These, as all the bloody Sacrifices, were offered up only as Types and Representatives of that *Grand Sacrifice*, which *Christ*, the Lamb of God, was to offer for the Sins of the World: And therefore they were appointed at the same Hours wherein his Death was begun, as I may so speak, and finished. A-

bout the *Third Hour*, or *Nine* in the Morning, he was delivered to *Pilate*, accused, examined, and condemned to die, and therefore the *Morning Sacrifice* was appointed at *that Hour*. About the *Sixth Hour*, or *Noon*, this Lamb of God was laid upon the Altar of the Cross, and at the *Ninth Hour* expired; as we learn from *St. Matthew*, saying, *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land, unto the ninth hour: and about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! and having cried again with a loud voice, he yielded up the ghost, Matt. xxvii. 45, 46, 50.* And this I verily believe was the Reason that the *Evening Sacrifice* every Day was appointed to be offered up at the *Ninth Hour*, that so the very time of *Christ's Suffering* might be foreshewn and typified by it, as the Place also was; it being absolutely forbidden to offer up any such *Sacrifices* after the Temple was built any where else, but only at *Jerusalem* where *Christ* was to suffer.

Now

Now to bring this nearer to our present purpose, we must further observe, that in all these continual Burnt-offerings, when the Lamb was laid upon the Altar, a Priest with a Censer took some of the Coals from off that Altar, and carried them into the Holy Place, where he put *Incense* upon them, and so offered it upon the Golden Altar before the *Veil* made for that purpose. This took up some considerable time, usually about half an Hour: All which time the People were at their Devotions, worshipping, and praying, and praising God; as appears from St. *Luke* himself, who speaking of *Zacharias* the Father of St. *John* the Baptist, saying, *According to the custom of the Priest's office, his lot was to burn Incense when he went into the Temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of Incense,* Luke i. 9, 10. This therefore was their time of Prayer: And it was the most proper time that could be for it, while the Lamb was burning upon the Altar without, as a Type of the Death of Christ; and the sweet *Incense* was burning within the Holy Place, upon Coals taken from thence, to put them in mind of his Intercession which he makes by virtue of that Death he suffered for them, that their Prayers might be heard, and their Services accepted before God. All which was represented in a Vision to St. *John*, when he saw Seven Angels which stood before God, and another Angel (which was Christ the Mediator) came and stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer, and there was given unto him much *Incense*, that he should offer it with the Prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar which was before the Throne. And the smoke of the *Incense*, which came with the Prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angels hand, Rev. viii. 3, 4.

And because the holy Incense was then burnt as a Type of Christ's Intercession.

For hereby is plainly signified, that God smells a sweet Savour in the Prayers of his People, or accepts of them only upon the account of the Merits of the

Death of *Jesus Christ*, the *Angel* of the Covenant, and by means of his Mediation for them, typified by the sweet *Incense* burning upon Coals taken from the Altar, whereupon the Lamb was offered, at the same time that the People were at their Devotions, and so ascending up together with them into Heaven, and there rendring them acceptable unto GOD. The same is intimated also by St. *Peter*, where speaking to the Saints of GOD, he saith, *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Whereas our Prayers, and the other Services which we perform to him, are called *Sacrifices*, in allusion to, but *spiritual*, to distinguish them from those under the Law; so they are said to be *acceptable to GOD*, not in themselves, but by *Jesus Christ*: By *Jesus Christ* perfuming them with the *Spiritual Incense* of his own Merits, and so making them a sweet Savour to the Lord, as it was *Typically* expressed in the Law, Lev. i. 9, &c.

By this therefore we may see how the *third* and *ninth* Hours of the Day, or, as we speak, *Nine* in the Morning, and *Three* in the Afternoon, came to be their chief *set hours* for Prayer every Day; even because at these Hours the *daily Sacrifices* were Offered, and the *holy Incense* burnt, as Types of Christ's Death and Intercession, whereby alone their Prayers could go up as a Memorial before GOD, and be well-pleasing to him. For this cause therefore these were their *constant* Hours of Prayer, not only at the Temple in

Hours of Prayer
the same in the
country Syna-
gogues as in the
Temple.

Jerusalem, but in their *Synagogues* also all the Country over, devout People daily resorting thither at the said Hours to perform their Devotions, that so they might both keep up their Communion with the Church at *Jerusalem*, and likewise communicate in the *Sacrifices* and *Incense*, which were there offered at these hours, or rather in what was signified by them

them for God's Acceptance of what they did. But they who dwelt at Jerusalem usually went to the Temple it self, at the aforefaid Hours. And that is the reason that there were so many gathered together there upon the Day of Pentecost, at the third hour of the Day, as St. Peter saith, Acts ii. 15. That three Thousand of them were there converted to the Faith of Christ, Acts ii. 41. And there were as many or more there at the ninth hour, when St. Peter and St. John went thither together, as appears in that there were above five thousand at that time converted, Acts iv. 4.

But how many soever were there besides, be sure these two great Apostles went together into the Temple at the Hour of Prayer, being the Ninth Hour: Not now out of any respect to the Sacrifices which were still continued to be offered by the unbelieving Jews. For the Apostles knew well enough that all the Laws about them expired upon the Death of Christ.

So that now all such Sacrifices could signifie nothing at all. But they went to the Temple, as it was an house of Prayer; a Duty that always was, and always must be performed unto God. And they went at the ninth hour, because it was the hour of Prayer. It had been so for many Ages, and there was no reason why it should be now laid aside. God himself had appointed it for the time of the Evening Sacrifice, because Christ, the grand Sacrifice of the World, was to be offered up at that time. And though the virtue of the Legal Sacrifice was now ceased, yet the reason, why that time was appointed for it, still continued, there being as much reason why Christ's Death should be commemorated by our chris-

That all the Jews might hold Communion with the Church at Jerusalem.

And in the Sacrifices and Incense then offered.

St. Peter and St. John went to the Temple at 3, as to a House of Prayer.

Because Christ's Death was thenceforward Christian

to be commemorated by the christian sacrifice.

istian Sacrifice, as there was, that it should be fore-shewn and typified by the *Legal*, about the time it happened. At least there was no reason to the contrary. And therefore that

being the usual time for publick Prayers in the place where they then were, they went up together into the Temple at that Hour to perform their Devotions. And it is left upon Record that they did so, as I observed before, on purpose that the Church in all Ages might learn by their Example to set apart some certain times every Day in the Year for publick Prayer. And accordingly as the Jewish Church had by God's own

Hence the christian church derived its Morning and Evening service.

appointment the Morning and Evening Sacrifice every day in the Year: So all Christian churches have been used to have their Morning and Evening Prayers publickly performed every day. As might easily be shewn out of the Records of the Church, from the

beginning of Christianity.

Not to insist upon other Churches, I shall instance at present only in our own; which as in all things else, so particularly in this, is exactly conformable to the Catholick and Apostolick Church. In the First Book of Common-prayer made by our

The Church of England conformable to the catholick Church, in her hours of Prayer.

Church at the Beginning of the Reformation, there was a Form composed both for Morning and Evening Prayer: the Title of that for the Morning ran thus; *An Order for Mattins daily through the Year*: and of that for the Evening, *An Order for Even Song*

throughout the Year: and accordingly there were Psalms and Chapters appointed both for the Morning and Evening of every day. About three or four Years after, the same Book was revised, and put forth again. And then the Church taking notice that daily Prayers had been in some places neglected, at the End of the Preface she added two new Rules, or as we call them,

Rubricks

of Publick Prayer.

Rubricks, which are still in force, as ye may see in the Common-Prayer Books which we now use.

The first is this:

And all the Priests and Deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, not being let by sickness, or other urgent cause.

By this every one that is admitted into holy Orders, although he be neither Parson, Vicar nor Curate of any particular Place, yet he is bound to say both Morning and Evening Prayer every day, either in some church or chapel where he can get leave to do it, or else in the house where he dwells, except he be hindred by some such Cause which the Ordinary of the Place judges to be reasonable and urgent.

Every Minister bound to say Morning and Evening Prayer every day, either in a church or chapel, or his own house.

The other Order is this:

And the Curate that ministreth in every Parish-church or chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindred, shall say the same in the Parish-church or chapel where he ministreth, and shall cause a Bell to be tolled thereunto, a convenient time before he begin, that people may come to hear God's Word, and pray with him.

Here we have a plain and expresse Command, that the Curate, whether he be the Incumbent himself, or another procured by him to do it; whosoever it is that ministreth God's Holy Word and Sacraments in any church or chapel in England, shall say the same Morning and Evening Prayer daily in the Parish-Church or Chapel where he ministreth, and shall take Care that a Bell be tolled a convenient time before he begins, that People having Notice of it may come to God's house to

Every Parish-priest is obliged to say prayers in the church or chapel Morning and Evening every day.

to hear his Holy Word read, and join with the Minister in performing their *publick* Devotions to him. This every Minister or Curate in *England* is bound to do every day in the Year, if he be at home, and be not otherwise reasonably hindred. And whether any Hindrance be reasonable or no, the Minister himself is not the Ordinary Judge: For in all such Cases that is referred by the common Laws of the *church* to the *Bishop* of the Diocese, or the *Ordinary* of the Place where he ministrereth.

The Law hath made this the *Duty* of every Minister, and the *Bishop* or *Ordinary* is to see he doth it; and whether any have reasonable Cause ever to omit it, or whether the Cause they pretend for it be reasonable or no; this is left by the Law to him. He may allow or disallow of the Pretence, as he upon the full hearing of it shall see good; and may punish with the *censures* of the Church any Minister within his Jurisdiction that doth not read the Prayers of the Church, or take care they be read every *Morning* and *Evening* in the Year, except at such times when the Minister can prove that he had such a reasonable Hindrance or Impediment as will justify him before God and his Church.

This care hath our Church taken, that *publick prayers* be read every *Morning* and *Evening* throughout the Year in every Parish within her Bounds, that all who live in her Communion may, after the Example of the *Apostles* in my Text, go every day into the *Temple* or *Church* at the *Hour* of prayer. She hath not appointed the Hour when either the *Morning* or *Evening* Prayer shall begin: Because the same Hour might not be so convenient in all Places: So that in some Places it might be pretended that there was a reasonable Hindrance: That it could not be done just at the time. Wherefore to prevent any such Plea, and
to

to make the Duty as easie and practieable, both to the Minister and People, as it could be, the Church hath left that to the *Ministers* themselves, who, considering every one his own and his Peoples Circumstances, may and ought to appoint such *hours* both for *Morning* and *Evening* Prayer in their respective Places, as they in their Discretion shall judge to be most convenient. Only they ought to take care in general, that *Morning* Prayers be always read before, and *Evening* after *Noon*. And it is very expedient that the *same Hours* be every Day, as much as it is possible, observed in the same Place, that People knowing it beforehand may order their Affairs so as to be ready to go to the Church at the *Hour of Prayer*.

But notwithstanding this great care that our church hath taken to have *daily Prayers* in every Parish, we see by sad Experience, they are shamefully neglected all the Kingdom over: There being very few Places where they have any

The Neglect of this chargeable upon Priest or People?

publick Prayers upon the *Week-days*, except perhaps upon *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*; because it is expressly commanded, that both *Morning* and *Evening Prayers* be read *every day* in the Week, as the *Litany* upon those. And why this Commandment should be neglected more than the other, for my part I can see no reason. But I see plain enough that it is a great Fault, a plain Breach of the known Laws of Christ's Holy Catholick Church, and particularly of that part of it, which by his Blessing is settled among us. But where doth this Fault lie? I hope not in the *clergy*. For I dare not suppose or imagine, but that every *Minister* in *England*, that hath the Care of Souls committed to him, would be willing and glad to read the *Prayers* every day, for their Edification, if the People could be perswaded to co come to them. I am sure there is never a Minister but is *obliged* to read them *daily*; and never a Parish in *England*, but where the People may have them so read, if they will;

will; for they may *require* it by the *Laws* both of our *Church* and *State*, except at such times when their Minister is reasonably hindred from the Execution of his Office, in the Sense before explained.

But the mischief is, Men cannot, or
Or *Laity*? rather will not, be perswaded to it.

They think it a great Matter to come to Church upon the *Lord's day*, when they cannot openly follow their particular Callings if they would.

Upon other days they have other Business to mind of greater consequence, as they think, than going to *Prayers*.
The frivolous Pretences of the *Laity* for neglecting *Prayers*. To some it is a great disturbance to hear the *Bell* sounding in their Ears, and calling them to their Duty, which

they being resolved not to practise, it makes them very uneasy to be so often put in mind of it. Others can make a shift to bear that pretty well, as not looking upon themselves concerned in it. For they take it for granted, that *Prayers* were intended only for such as have nothing else to do. As for their parts, they have a great deal of Work upon their Hands, and must mind that, without troubling their Heads about any thing else. This is the plain case of some; but not of all. Blessed be God, he hath opened the Eyes of many, especially in this *City*, who now see the things that belong to their everlasting peace, and therefore are as constant at their publick Devotions, as they are at their private Business.

And I trust in his infinite Goodness and Mercy, that he who hath begun so good a work among us, will one day perfect it, that we may all meet together with one heart, and with one mouth to pray unto him, and praise and glorifie his great Name every day

in the Week, both in this *City*, and all the Kingdom over. What an happy *City*, what a glorious Kingdom would it then be! And how happy should I think my self, if it would please God to make me, the unworthiest

worthiest of all his Servants, an Instrument in his Almighty Hand towards the effecting of it in *this Place*! It is too great a Felicity for me to flatter my self with the least hopes of. Howsoever, I must do my duty, and leave the Issue to him who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hand. And therefore in his Name, shall lay some such plain and obvious Considerations before you, which I hope, by his Blessing, may prevail upon all here present to follow the Holy Apostles in my Text, *in going together into the House of God at the Hour of Prayer.*

For this purpose I might shew the Excellency and Usefulness of the Prayers which our

Church hath appointed to be read every Morning and Evening. But having already offered at something towards that upon another Occasion, I shall here only premise in general, that they are such, both for their Language, the Matter, the Method, and the Manner of performing them, that, to speak with the least, there never was, that we know of, nor is at this day, a better, or more proper Form of publick Devotions prescribed and used in any part

The Excellency and Usefulness of common Prayer it self.

See the Bishop's Sermon of the Usefulness and Excellency of the common Prayer.

of Christ's Church militant here on Earth: There being nothing wanting in them, that can any way conduce to the Ends for which they are designed, even to the setting forth of God's Glory, and to the edifying of his People. There we *confess* our Sins to God, and have his Pardon, and Absolution of them declared to us, being penitent, by one of his own Ministers. There we *praise* and *magnifie* his glorious Name, in *Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual songs.* There we have some part of his Holy Word *read*, and so his *divine Will* made known to us. There we pray for all things necessary both for Life and Godliness; for whatsoever we can want, or desire to make us happy in this World and the next. And all this we there do in such a solemn and reverent manner, as becomes the Work we are about:

about: Insomuch that if it be not our own fault, we can never go to *church*, but we shall return better than we went. Which if all people were but as sensible of as some are, we should not need to use any Arguments to perswade them to *frequent* our *publick* Prayers as oft as possibly they can. But it is impossible they would ever know what Advantage it would be to them, unless they first made trial of it.

Which therefore that I may, by God's Assistance, perswade all here present for the future to do; I desire you to consider first, that he himself that made you, hath sufficiently declared it to be
God's command his Will and Pleasure that you should
to the Israelites perform *publick Devotions* to him
for publick De- twice a day, *Morning* and *Evening*, in
votions twice that he expressly required and com-
a day. manded his ancient Church and Peo-
 ple, the Children of *Israel*, to do

so. For, as I have shewn, he commanded them to *sacrifice* two Lambs every day; one in the *Morning*, and the other in the *Evening*, or *Afternoon*: Which was the same in effect, as to command them to perform their *publick* Devotions to him twice every day. For such were the *sacrifices* unto them. Not only because, by offering up such *sacrifices* to him in Obedience to his Command, they publicly acknowledged his supream Authority and Power over all things; but likewise, because, together with their *sacrifices*, they always offered up, as they were bound, their *Prayers* and *Praises* to him. For they never *sacrificed*, but they prayed at the same time, and *esteemed* no Prayers so effectual, as *those* which were joined with *sacrifices*; as appears from several Places of Scripture, where we read, that *Abraham built an Altar unto the Lord, and called upon the Name of the Lord*, Gen. xii. 8. And so did *Isaac*, Chap. xxvi. 25. He first built an Altar whereon to offer his *sacrifice*, and then prayed. And of *Samuel* it is said, that he *took a sucking Lamb, and offered it for a Purrit offering, wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord*

Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him, 1 Sam. vii. 9. And when *Samuel* had blamed *Saul* for offering a Burnt-offering before the time that he came to him, according to his Promise; *Saul*, to excuse himself, said, *I said the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made my supplication unto the Lord. I forced my self therefore, and offered a Burnt-offering, 1 Sam. xiii. 12.* where he speaks as if offering his Sacrifice, and making his supplication unto the Lord, was one and the same thing; not that it was so in it self, as some have thought, but because that sacrifice was so necessary to make his Prayer acceptable unto God, that he could not do one without the other; he could not pray, as he thought, effectually, without a Burnt-offering. There are many such places in the *Old Testament*, from whence it might be proved, that Sacrifices and Prayers always went together; neither are there some wanting in the *New*. As in the place which I mentioned before upon another occasion, where it is said, that *the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of Incense, Luke i. 10.* For the time of *Incense* was while the sacrifice was burning upon the Altar, and therefore that was the time of their publick Prayers. But, I need not have gone from my Text, to have proved this. For, *the ninth Hour* is here called *the Hour of prayer*; but that, as I have proved already, was *the Hour* of the Evening sacrifice, which puts it beyond all doubt, that their daily sacrifices were always accompany'd in course with publick Prayers and Devotions. And that is the reason why the Temple, where the sacrifices were offered, was called *an House of prayer*, as well as *an House of sacrifice, 2 Sam. vii. 12.* Yea, it is much oftener called by that Name, than it is by this; Prayer being the Duty principally required there, and sacrifice only for the sake of that, to make way for it to go up as a Memorial before God, and to be well-pleasing to him; not as if there was any such Virtue in the Blood of a Lamb, or in Flesh smoaking upon the Altar; but by means of the typical Relation which it had to Christ, *the Lamb of God,*

that taketh away the sins of the world; by whom alone our Prayers are acceptable unto God, as I observed before.

Wherefore, seeing God was pleased to command, that Sacrifices should be offered twice a day, to accompany and assist his Peoples Devotions; there was plainly something Moral as well as Levitical, in that Command. As it respected the sacrifices, it was purely Levitical, and therefore to cease at our Saviour's Death: But, as it respected the Peoples devotions, it was Moral, and of perpetual Obligation. People always were, and always will be, bound to offer up their Prayers and Thanksgivings unto God, and this, as being a moral Duty, was even in those days reckoned the more acceptable sacrifice of the two. I

The publick Devotions of the Jews were Moral and Levitical. *will praise the name of God, saith David, with a song, and I will the most regarded, magnifie him with thanksgiving; even amongst the Jews. this also shall please the Lord, better than an Ox or Bullock that hath horns and hoofs, Psal. lxxix. 30, 31.*

And therefore, when God commanded the *less*, it cannot be imagined but that he required the more principal Duty, even publick Prayers and Praises to be offered to him twice a day; as the *Jews* plainly understood it; as appears in that they had their daily prayers as constantly as they had their daily sacrifices, and that too at the same times when God commanded them to be offer'd, even every Morning and Evening; which they would not have had, if they had not looked upon themselves as obliged by that Command to pray, as well as to sacrifice at those times.

But surely to pray to God, and to praise his holy Name, which make up our publick devotions, is a Duty as much incumbent upon christians, as ever it was upon *Jews*. It is our only daily sacrifice which we offer unto God in the Name

Name of his Son: By him therefore, saith the Apostle, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his Name, Heb. xiii. 15. This is now to be our continual sacrifice. And tho' we do not offer up a Lamb to God, together with our devotions every day, yet we present that to him, which is of more Worth and Value than what the *Jews* offered. They presented the shadow, we the substance: They offered a Lamb, as a Type of Christ to come; we offer up our Prayers to God in the Name of Christ himself, as already sacrificed for us, and as presenting our Prayers to his Father with the Incense of his own Merits. Whilst they prayed, Christ's Death and Intercession for them were only typically represented by a Lamb burning upon one, and Incense upon another Altar. But in all our Prayers we actually name Him, as the Person by whose alone Merits and Meditations our Prayers can be accepted; concluding every Collect with saying, through Jesus-Christ our Lord, or something to that purpose.

By which means we have better Ground, and clearer Occasion also given us to trust in God for his Acceptance of our devotions than they had; and therefore ought certainly to be as constant as they were in the performance of them; otherwise we can expect no other, but that they will rise up against us in Judgment at the last Day: Neither do I see what we can answer, or plead for our selves. For God having once commanded that sacrifices should be offered to him every Morning and Evening in the Year; he thereby plainly signified, that it is his divine Will and Pleasure that his People in all Ages should do something twice every day, whereby to make their publick Acknowledgments of his infinite Goodness and Mercy to them. But this we cannot do now any other way, but by praying to him, and praising and magnifying his most glorious Name, in a publick and solemn manner, which we are therefore doubtless bound to do, or

Nay, the Christian sacrifice is more acceptable to God than the Jewish.

at least to take all Opportunities that we can get of doing it *twice* every day.

And indeed *Christ* himself doth in effect require the same thing of us; for that it is

3. *The Lord's Prayer a strong Argument for constant, public Prayer.* his Pleasure that we should constantly use *that Form* of Prayer, which he, as our Great Lord and Master, was pleased to compose for

all his *Disciples*, is so plain, that I wonder how any can doubt of it; there being no *command* in all the *Bible* more plain than that, *When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* Luke ii.

2. But it is as plain, that he design'd *this Prayer* should be used *publicly*, and in *common* by his *Disciples* when met together in their publick Assemblies: In that he hath drawn it up all along in the *plural Number*, that many may join together in it, and say, *Our Father, which art in Heaven. Give us this Day, our daily Bread, and forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* So that there is not *one* Petition, nor *one* Expression in it, but what a *whole congregation* may jointly use. From whence *St. Cyprian* truly observed, that this is *Publica & communis Oratio*, a *publick* and *common Prayer*. Not but that it may, and ought to be used also privately by every single *christian* apart by himself; because every *christian* is a Member of *Christ's catholick church*, and should pray as such in *private*, as well as in *publick*; and for all his Fellow-members, as well as for himself, they being all but one Body. But however, it must be acknowledged, that it being so exactly fitted to a *publick* Congregation, it was primarily and chiefly intended for that purpose. And that our Saviour would have us say this Prayer every Day, appears most plainly from that Petition in it, *Give us this day our daily Bread.* For this shews, that as we depend upon God every Day for our necessary Food, so we ought to pray unto him every Day for it. And if we must put up this Petition every day, we must put up all the rest with it.

For

For Christ hath *joined* them together, and therefore we must not *put them asunder*. Neither is there any part of the Prayer but what is as necessary to be said every Day as this.

Wherefore, seeing our blessed Saviour himself was most graciously pleased to compose *this* Prayer so as to suit it to our daily *publick Devotions*, and hath plainly commanded us to use it, according as he had composed it; we may reasonably from thence infer, that it his divine Will and Pleasure that we should *publickly* pray to our Heavenly Father every Day, as his Church had all along before done it, *Morning and Evening*. Be sure his Apostles thought so, when they had received his Holy Spirit, to lead them according to his Promise, into all Truth, and to bring into their re-

4. As well as the practice of the Apostles.

membrance all things that he had said unto them. For after the Day of *Pentecost*, on which the Holy Ghost came upon them, the next News that we hear of any of them, is, that *Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, or the hour of Evening Prayer*; which they would not have done, if they had not believed it to be agreeable to the Doctrine which he had taught them.

And if there was no *divine Revelation* for it, our own *natural Reason* might teach us the same thing. For seeing we depend continually upon God, and every day receive fresh Mercies from him; there is all the Reason in the World that we should eve-

5. Natural Reason calls for daily publick Prayer and Praise.

ry day some way or other testify our Acknowledgment that we do so; For that is all that we can do to him for all that he doth for us. We cannot give him any thing; for we have nothing but what he gives us. And therefore he expects nothing from us for all the Favours he is pleas'd to shew us; but only to own that they come from him; and to shew we do so, by all such means and methods as he for that

purpose hath prescribed to us. Of which, the Performance of *publick Devotions* was always reckoned the most plain and proper. I say *publick*, for what we do in *private* none in the World knows but God and our selves. But by performing our *publick Devotions* to him, we demonstrate to the World that we believe and acknowledge that he is the supreme Governor and Disposer of all things in it, that it is in him *we live, and move, and have our being*; and that we neither have, nor can have any thing but what we receive from him. By our *praising* him for what we have, we own that it was he who gave it: And by *praying* to him for what we want, we own it is he alone who can give it to us. And by doing this *publickly*, we shew that we are not ashamed to own it, nor care if all the World knows that we have nothing of our own; nothing but what we receive from God, and wish that all others would join with us, and assist us in *praising* of him, and in *praying* to him, both for themselves, and for us too. This is properly to *serve* God, and *glorifie* him in the World. The great Work we were made for, and for which we are still supported and maintained by him. So that by this means we may so far answer the End of our Creation, and the End of all his Goodness and Mercies to us. For he *made all things for himself* at first, Prov. xvi. 4. And he still doth all things for *himself*, even for *his own* Glory. And we accordingly set forth *his* Glory in all our *publick Devotions*; by owning him publickly for our great and continual Benefactor, by recounting the glorious Works that he hath done for us, and supplicating him for all the good things that we can ever have: And so ascribing the Glory of all to him. And therefore we ought in reason to perform such *Devotions* as often as we can. We are bound to do it, by all those Reasons which oblige us to serve God that made us, and to do the Work which he sent us into the World about. For that this is properly *-serving* of God, or as we therefore call it, *divine Service*; the Holy Ghost himself testifies, where speaking of

of *Anna* the Prophetess, he saith, *that she departed not from the Temple, but served God with fasting and prayer night and day*, Luke ii. 47. that is, as she constantly kept the *Fasts* of the *Church*, so she as constantly went to the *Temple* at the *hour of prayer*, both Evening and Morning, and there performed her Devotions. And if we would have the same Testimony that she had, even that we serve God, we must endeavour all we can to follow her pious Example, as we see the Apostles in my Text did, by going into the *Temple*, or the *House of God* at the *hour of prayer*.

And, as this is much for the Honour of God, so it is also for the Honour of Christ,

and that Holy Religion which he hath planted upon Earth; which, though it be the best, or rather the only true Religion profess'd in the World, yet it cannot appear to be so any other way, than by the Lives and Actions of those

Christians bound to exceed all others in the performance of publick Devotions for the Honour of Christ.

who profess it; and particularly by the frequency of their publick Devotions to the supream Governour of the World. If they who profess the christian Religion, come short of other People in this, it would be a great Reflection upon the Founder of it. For it would seem to intimate as if his Religion had not that Power upon the Minds of Men as others have; nor answered the end and notion of Religion in general, even the glorifying Almighty God so well as others do. But there are no People upon Earth, we know of, who have any Sense of Religion at all, but they do something or other every Day, whereby to express it, and to shew the great Esteem and Respect they have for the God they worship.

The *Mahometans*, although their Religion be grounded upon meer Imposture, yet notwithstanding, being obliged by it to pray five times a Day, they usually do it if they can, in their *Masques*, or

Else Mahometans and Jews will rise up in Judgment against them.

Temples.

Temples. I know the *primitive christians* prayed oftener, and so do many at this day, either in *publick* or *private*. But the greatest part of those which are called *christians*, scarce ever pray, at least as we know of, so much as *once a Week*, unless it be perhaps on the *Lord's day*. Nay, I fear there are many, who never *publickly* pray at all for a whole Year together, if in their whole Lives. But woe to such *christians* as these, if they may be called so, who thus *crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, putting him to open shame*. It will be far more tolerable for *Turks* and *Mahometans*, at the day of *Judgment*, than for these.

The *Jews*, as I have shewn, had their *Set-hours* of prayer, every *Morning* and *Evening*, both at their *Temple*, and in all their *Synagogues*, which were dispersed all over the Country. And they were so constant and punctual in going thither at the hours of prayer, that if any one lived near a *synagogue*, and did not then go to pray with the congregation, they put a Mark upon that Man, calling him שוֹרֵט, an ill Neighbour, as *Maimonides*, a learned *Jew*, assures us in his *Tephillah*. I wish there were no such Neighbours among us, ill Neighbours, that seldom or never join with us in our *publick Devotions*; and so as to all outward appearance, live as *without God in the World*. But what a Reproach is this to our *holy Religion*, and to our *blest Saviour* himself, the Author of it, that *Jews* and *Turks*, who are Strangers, yea, Enemies to his Religion, should be more constant at their *Devotions* to Almighty God, than they who profess it! God grant it may never be laid to their charge. But why do I wish that, when I know that it will. It will most certainly be laid to their charge e'er long, except they repent of it before it be too late; and that too, so as to be as constant for the future at our *publick Prayers*, as they have hitherto slighted, or neglected them.

This would, in a great measure, retrieve the Honour, which our Religion hath lost by such careless Professors of it: For it would cast such a Lustre upon it, as would make it outshine all other Religions in its out-

outward Appearance, as much as it excels them in its inward Purity and Truth; which would redound very much to the Glory of *Christ*, our ever blessed Redeemer. And therefore all that have any Regard for that, as I hope we all have, can't but look upon themselves as *bound* in Duty to take all *Opportunities* they can get of performing their *publick Devotions* to Almighty God, according as that *Religion* requires which he hath taught, and they profess.

If we would but give our selves time to look into these things, which I have thus briefly explained; we might easily see what *Obligations* lie upon *Ministers* to read, and upon *People* to assist at our *publick Prayers*, when and wheresoever they can get an *Opportunity*. It is God's Will, and for his Glory; and therefore it is our Duty, and we are bound to do it, whether we can get any thing by it or no. But that Great and most Gracious God, whom we serve, hath of his *Infinite Goodness* so order'd it, that whatsoever is done in Obedience to his *command*, and for the *honour* of his Name, doth *ipso facto* tend also to our *profit* and *advantage*. And this particularly doth so in an high Degree.

Prayer it self, in general, is a Duty so well-pleasing unto God, that he hath appointed it to be the Means whereby to obtain of him all the good things we can want or desire: He hath passed his Word, and hath promised to grant them, if we ask them as we ought, in the Name of *Christ*, and with Faith in his Word and Promise, Matt. vii. 7. xxi. 22. Mark xi. 24. Joh. xvi. 23, &c. And if the prayers, which single Persons make in their own private houses or closets, be so powerful and prevalent, those are much more so which are made by several Persons met together for that purpose in God's house. To the publick Prayers there are many special promises made, which belong peculiarly unto them. I shall instance only in

The Advantages of prayer as well-pleasing to God.

Especially of publick prayers.

two. The first shall be that of our blessed Saviour; Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them, Matt. xviii. 19, 20. Here we have Christ's own Word, that where any two

(much more where many) agree to ask any thing of God, as we do in every Petition we put up in our publick prayers, it shall be

done for them. And that where two or three, or any Number of devout Persons are met together in his Name, he is specially present with them, to hear their Prayers, and to present them to his Father, to be accepted, and granted by him. Which promise, in all respects, doth as properly belong to our publick, as to any Prayers that can be made; they being such as we all agree in before-hand; and we do not only meet, but put them up also in the Name of Christ.

The same may be said also of the promise which God made to the house that Solomon had built and dedicated to him, saying, Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place, 2 Chron. vii. 15. For though this promise was first made to that House particularly; yet in that, it was designed for all such Places as should be dedicated to God, as that was. As God having said to Joshua, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, Josh. i. 5. the Apostle from thence infers, that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what Man shall do unto me, Heb. xiii. 6. So here, The Lord having said to Solomon, Mine ears shall be attent to the prayer that is made in this place; we may boldly say, the Lord hath a particular respect to places devoted to his service; and will in a peculiar manner hear and accept the Prayers which we make in them.

Now

Now seeing there are such *special promises* made to Prayers publickly performed by several Persons together in God's *own House*; we therefore ought to have a special regard to such Prayers, and a special Trust and

Hence publick prayers preferred before private.

Confidence, that God, according to the said *promises*, will in a special manner hear them, and grant what we there pray for together. And then he will certainly do it, as the Saints of God in all Ages have found by Experience; and therefore have always preferred the *publick* before *private Devotions*. And if they could not be bodily present with

them, while their Brethren were at their *publick Devotions* in God's *House*, yet they had such a respect to them, that they would pray at the same time, and so join with them in their Souls, altho'

God's acceptance of publick prayer, or even prayers made at the publick Hour.

they could not do it with their Bodies. There are many Instances of this in the Holy Scripture: And some wherein God himself was pleased in a *wonderful manner* to signify his Approbation of it. It was at the *Evening Sacrifice*, the time of *publick prayer*, that Ezra made that *solemn Prayer*, which was so highly approved of, as to be made part of the *canonical scriptures*, Ezra ix. 5. It was at the time of the offering the *Evening sacrifice* at *Jerusalem*, that *Elijah* the Prophet, at *Mount Carmel*, prayed so effectually, that the *Fire of the Lord* fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stone, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the Trench, which he had there made, to the confirming of the People in the Worship of the *True God*, 1 Kings xviii. 29. 38. It was about the time of the *Evening Oblation*, that *Daniel* was praying when the Angel *Gabriel* was sent to acquaint him with the precise time of the *Messiah's* coming, Dan. ix. 21. And, if we may believe an *Apocryphal Book*, it was about the time that the Incense of that Evening was offered at *Jerusalem*, in the *House* of

of the Lord, that *Judeth* prayed at *Bethulia*, so as to overcome that vast Army which then lay before the Place, *Judeth* ix. 1. Be sure it was at the *ninth Hour*, the Hour of *publick* Prayer, that *Cornelius* was praying in his House, when an *Angel* was sent to acquaint him, that his *Prayers and his Alms were come up for a Memorial before God*, and to direct him how to come to the Knowledge of Christ, and so into the way of Salvation, *Acts* x. 3, 30.

It was not certainly for nothing, that it is so particularly noted, that these Prayers were made by such eminent Saints at the time of *Evening Sacrifice*, or which is the same, at the *ninth Hour*, the Hour of *publick* Prayer. Neither do I see any reason why such a Circumstance should be so often left upon Record, but that we should learn thereby, that God hath a particular respect, according to his Promise, to the *publick Devotions* which his People perform together to him; so as to hear also the *prayers* which are made at the same time by others, who join with them in their Hearts, though they cannot any other way.

As *David* also did, when praying in *private*, or at some distance from the *Temple*; he said to God, *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as Incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the Evening sacrifice*, *Psal.* cxli. 2. Where we may observe, that in this, as well as in all the Places before quoted; not the *Morning*, but the *Evening Sacrifice*, is particularly named; because, as I suppose, that was the *greater* Sacrifice of the two, as being offered at the *same Hour* wherein the Death of Christ, typified by it, was actually accomplished; and for that Reason also no Sacrifice was to be offered after that. And here we may likewise observe how great Esteem *David* had for the *publick* Service at the *Temple*, and how much he preferred it before his own *private* prayer, in that he had not only an Eye to it while he prayed, and so *joined* as well as he could in it, but he desired that his *private* Prayer might be like to that, or as acceptable as that was to God.

But

But the more pleasing any Duty is to God, the more profitable it is to those who do it. And therefore he having *Publick Prayer* so often, both by Word and Deed, *advantageous to* manifested himself well-pleased *Church and State.* with the *publick* or common Service which his People perform to him, we cannot doubt but that they always receive proportionable Advantage from it. The *Jews* call *stated publick Prayers* *מעשרות* Stations, and have a Saying among them, *That without such Stations the World could not stand.* Be sure no People have any ground to expect *publick* Peace and Tranquility, without praising and praying *publickly* unto him, who alone can give it. But if all the People (suppose of this Nation) should every day with one Heart and Mouth join together in our *common* Supplications to Almighty God, how happy should we then be? How free from Danger? How safe and secure under his Protection? This is the Argument which Christ himself useth, why *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*; in the Parable of the unjust Judge, who was at last prevailed with to grant a Widow's Request, meerly by her importunity in asking it. *And shall not God, saith he, avenge his own Elect, which cry day and night unto him, tho' he bear long with them? I tell you he will avenge them speedily.* But then he adds, *Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth?* Luke xviii. 7, 8. As if he had said, God will most certainly avenge and protect those who cry Day and Night, *Morning and Evening* to him. But Men will not believe this; and that is the Reason why they are so few who believe that he will hear their Prayers, according to his Promise. But blessed be God, tho' they be but few, there are some who really believe God's Word, and accordingly *pray every Morning and Evening*, not only for themselves, but for the Country where they live, for all their Governours both in *Church and State*, and for all sorts and conditions of Men among us. To these the whole Kingdom is beholden for its support

and preservation. If they should once fail, I know not what would become of us. But so long as there are pious and devout Persons crying Day and Night to God for Aid and Defence against our Enemies, we need not fear any hurt they can ever do us; at least, according to God's ordinary Course of dealing in the World.

I know that he is sometimes so
Unless God be highly incens'd against a People,
highly incens'd against a people. that he will hearken to no Intercessions for them. As when he said of the idolatrous and factious

Jews, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my Mind could not be towards this People, Jer. xv. 1. Moses had before diverted his Wrath from them, *Exod. xxxij. 11, 12, 14.* and so had Samuel, *1 Sam. vii. 9.* but at this time he saith, *Though both of them stood before him, and besought him for it, yet he would not be reconciled to this People.* Which plainly implies, that this was an extraordinary Case, and that he ordinarily used to hearken to the Prayers which his faithful Servants, such as Moses and Samuel were, made to him in behalf of the People among whom they dwelt: According to that of the Apostle St. James, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous Man availeth much,* Jam. 5. 6. To the same purpose is that parallel Place in the Prophet Ezekiel, where God saith, *That if a Land sin grievously against him, and he send the Famine, the Sword, the Pestilence, or the like Punishment, to cut off both Man and Beast from it, though these three Men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver none but their own Souls,* Ezek. xiv. 14, 16, 18, 20. But here we may likewise observe, That in such an extraordinary Case as this, which God grant may not be our own ere long, although such righteous Persons by all their Prayers and Tears can deliver none else, yet they themselves shall be deliver'd. As Lot was out of Sodom, and the Christians, at the final Destruction of Jerusalem, when Eleven Hundred Thousand Jews perish'd (*Joseph. de Bel. Jud. l. 7. c. 17.*) and not one Christian,

lian, they being all, by the secret Providence of God, convey'd out of the City before the Siege began, *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 5.* Which shews the particular Care of all that believe and serve him. And that one would think is enough to prevail with all that consult their own or others Welfare, to neglect no Opportunities which they can get of serving so great and good a Master all the Ways they can, and particularly by performing their daily Devotions to him. In that they have good ground to hope that he will *hear* their Prayers for others, but may be sure he will take Care of them, whatsoever happens.

Besides these common Benefits which accrue to the Kingdom and Church in general, from the *common* Prayers which are daily performed in it, and to the Persons who perform them as they are Members of the same: There are likewise many others which they thereby receive,

Publick or common Prayer advantageous to Christians in their private Capacities.

every one in his own private Capacity, as he is a *Christian* in general. Especially when they perform these their daily Devotions, according to that excellent Order which our Church hath appointed for them. For by thus *addressing* themselves every day to God as their heavenly

How?

Father, they learn to live with an entire Submission to him and Dependance upon him in all the Changes and Chances of this mortal Life. By *confessing* their sins every day to God, their Hearts are always touched with the sense of them, and with godly Sorrow and Repentance for them. By having God's *Absolution* of them declar'd every day unto them by one of his own *Ministers*, they are confirmed in their Hopes of Pardon by the Blood of Christ. By *praising* and *glorifying* Almighty God every Day, their Hearts are cheared, and their Spirits refreshed with the remembrance and recognition of his Glory and Goodness towards them, as *David's* was, when he said, *My Soul shall be satisfied even as it was with Marrow and*

Fatness, when my Mouth praiseth thee with joyful Lips, Psal. lxxiii. 5. By *hearing* some part of God's Holy Word read to them every Day, they are constantly put in mind of their Duty to him, what he would have them to believe and do, which otherwise they might be apt to forget. By *repeating* the Apostle's Creed every Day, wherein all the fundamental Articles of our Christian Religion are comprehended, they are kept firm and stedfast in the true Faith of Christ. By *praying* every Day for *Pardon* and *Peace*, and *Grace*, and all things necessary both for this Life and the next, they have the Word and Promise of GOD himself continually engag'd to grant them, and therefore may be always confident that they shall have them. By *approaching* every Day into GOD's special Presence, and there conversing with him according to his own Ordinance and Appointment, they live always with a quick sense of GOD upon their Minds, and under the Influences of his Holy Spirit to assist and direct them in all their ways.

But why do I offer at shewing the many and great Advantages which arise from the daily frequenting the *publick* Prayers of the Church, with that Attention, Faith, Reverence and Devotion, which is requisite to so Divine a Duty; when they are so many and so great that no Man is able fully to describe them, nor can any conceive aright of them, but only they who by reason of use *have their senses exercised to discern them?* They find by Experience, that next to the *frequent receiving* of the *Lord's Supper*, this is the most effectual means they can use, whereby to keep their Minds always in a truly pious and christian Temper. And therefore are ready upon all Occasions to attest it, *not only with their Lips, but also in their Lives and Actions.* And I cannot but wonder that People should slight those Holy Exercises, which they reap so much Profit from, and feel so much Pleasure and Delight in. Whereas on the other side, they who never go to the Prayers at all, or but very seldom, and so never receive any Benefit from them to themselves, they wonder as much

much how others should receive any; if they be not sometimes tempted also, to say or think with those Sons of Belial in *Job*, *What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?* *Job xxi. 15.* I hope there are not many who really think so; but I am sure that most

Why the Service of God is thought unprofitable to Men.

Men act as if they thought that there is nothing to be got by *serving God*, or *praying to him*. For all Men naturally desire that which will bring them in any profit or advantage, and lay out themselves wholly for the obtaining of it. And therefore if they believed that the *serving God* would do that, they would need no other Arguments to perswade them to it. If every Man that came to prayers could be sure to get but One Shilling for every time he came, I am apt to think that all the Churches, where there are daily prayers, would be every Day as full as they can hold both Morning and Evening. But the mischief is, the profit, which is to be had there, is of another Nature, and such as they can't fancy to be any profit at all; in that they are not, as they think, made richer by it in the things pertaining to this Life. Though that also is a great Mistake: For *Godliness*, or the worshipping and serving God, *hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. But howsoever, this being only in promise, not in present Payment, they cannot get into their Heads that it is worth their while to look after

it. And as for the *other World*, which the Promises respect, they have no sense of that upon their Minds, or at least, not enough to

Because Men think the Benefits of it respect not this world.

over-balance their Cares for this. And though Men may pretend a thousand little Excuses for their neglecting the publick Service of God, this still lies at the bottom of them all. They do not really believe that they can get so much by that, as they may by doing something else. If they did, our Churches would be as full as the Exchange is every day in the Week.

Whereas we find the contrary by *sad* and *daily experience*; insomuch that in this *great* and *populous City*, which professeth *Religion* as much, if not more than any City in the World, to our shame be it spoken, there is scarce one in an hundred, that take any more notice of God and his Service, than as if they had *no God* to serve all the Week long. And that which is worst of all, they are not sensible that it is a Fault, and so cannot repent of it. Tho' *St. Peter* and *St. John* and such great Saints, used to go every Day to Church at the Hours of Prayer, they do not look upon themselves as *bound to do so*, for several Reasons which they know, but do not care to tell them. And they do wisely in keeping them to themselves: For they may perhaps make a shift to satisfy themselves at present with them; but I fear they can never satisfy others, nor themselves neither at the last Day, much less the Judge of the *whole World*. It would be very well if they could: But so far as we can guess at them, if we examine them but by the little Light we have in this World, we may easily see into the Vanity and Weakness of them.

This therefore is that which I shall now endeavour to do. Not that I can pretend to

The pretences examined which are usually assigned for the Neglect of publick Devotions.

search into all the *Reasons*, if they may be so called, which keep Men from our *daily Prayers*. Some, I believe, have none but their *own Wills*; with such it would be in vain to argue. But they which have any *shadow* of Reason for it, tho' some have *one*, some *another*, as they themselves best know; yet I humbly conceive they may all be reduced

to these following *Heads*, which I shall now consider.

First, Therefore, some will not come to our Prayers, because, as they pretend, they do not like them. But why do not they like them? Is there any thing in them contrary to the Word of God, or unbecoming his Ser-

2. *Disrelig.*

vice?

vice? That most of them, be sure, can't say, for they never *read* nor *heard* them in their Lives, nor are suffered to do it, by those which have Power over them, lest they *should* see, as they certainly *would*, their *Error* or *Mistake*. And they who have sometimes perhaps *read* or *heard* them, if they would but impartially examine them by God's *Revealed Will*, cannot but acknowledge them to be *exactly consonant* and *agreeable* to it: And some of them have testified the same, by joining with them *upon Occasion*, which, it is supposed, they would never have done, if they thought it *unlawful*; as it must needs be, if there be any thing in them *contrary* to God's Word. But why then do they not do it often? Why not *every*

Day? The great Reason which they pretend, is, because our *Prayer-ers* are *read* out of a *Book*; and

For want of Edification.

they had rather hear a Man *pray* by Heart, and *Extempore*, which they think to be more edifying; but the contrary to that hath been often *demonstrated* beyond all *Contradiction*; together with the *many* and *great* Inconveniencies which usually *follow* upon such *private extempore* Prayers in *publick*, not to be suffered in the Church of Christ, as they never were in any part of it till of late Years, and then too no where else but in this Island. And therefore at present I would *only* desire *those*, who separate from our *publick* Prayers, not out of *Humour* or *Faction*, but meerly out of an *erroneous* and *misguided* Conscience, of which sort I hope there are *some*, I would *desire* such to

consider, whether the great Promise which our Saviour hath made to *publick* Prayers can possibly be applied to their way of *praying*.

Confuted by Arguments against extempore Prayer.

To me it seems impossible, in that they do not perform the *Condition* required in it. The Promise I mentioned before, it runs thus: *Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on Earth touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven, Matth. xviii. 19* It is

plain

Especially from our Saviour's Promise to them who pray at all plain that this Promise belongs to publick Prayers, such as are made by several Persons together, at the least by Two: And it is as plain also, that it belongs to publick Prayers, wherein those several Persons agree together before-hand what they shall ask or pray for. But where the Minister useth only an *Extempore* Prayer, how many People soever may be present at it, there are no Two of them, who agree what they shall ask: That is left wholly to the Minister, none of the People so much as knowing what he intends to ask; nor he himself neither, before he hath asked it. They may perhaps agree to it after they hear it; and perhaps not. But if they do, that is not the thing which the Promise requires: For it is made only to those who agree touching any thing that they shall ask; and so requires a previous Agreement upon the Matter of our publick Prayers, before we put them to Almighty God; which they who use *Extemporary* Prayers, can by no means pretend to, nor by consequence to this great Promise of God's granting what they ask.

But now in the publick Prayers of the Church, we keep close to the Condition of the Promise: We ask nothing but what we all agree beforehand shall be asked. All the Clergy in England by their *Procurators* in Convocation, and all the Commons by their *Representatives* in Parliament, agreed together touching every thing that should be asked every Day in the Year: And so do all that come to the Prayers; they all know before what shall be then asked, and accordingly agree in the asking of it; and therefore have sure ground to believe, that God, according to his Promise, will do it for them.

These Words of our Saviour might be further improved, to shew, not only the Lawfulness, but the Necessity of Set-Forms of Prayer in the publick

And argues not only the Lawfulness

lick

lick Service of GOD. But I suppose there are *none* here present, but who are satisfied already in that; and therefore shall *only* add, that they who pretend this to be the *Reason* why they do not join with us in our *daily* Prayers, because they *like* those in private *Congregations* better, at the same time give us too much cause to suspect, that there is something else at the *Bottom*: For if that was all, they would have *those* which they call *publick* Prayers every Day in their *own* way; or at least would come to *ours* when they have none of their *own*; which they never do, and so perform *no* sort of publick Service to GOD upon the Week Days; which how they will answer at the last Day, for my part I know not; but if they do, it will be very well.

There are others, who have a more plausible Excuse for their not assisting at the *publick*, because they daily perform their *private Devotions* according to Christ's own Command, say-

3. Daily Use of private Prayer.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of Men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly, Matth. vi. 5, 6. But in these Words our Saviour is so far from excusing us

from *publick* Prayers, that he only directs us how to perform them aright; that we must not pray, as the Hypocritical Pharisees did, only

From St. Mark vi. 5, 6. misunderstood

to be seen of Men, and so make that the End of their *publick* Prayers; which were ordained, and therefore ought to be performed, not for *our own*, but for God's Honour and Glory. And whosoever performs them only *to be seen of Men*, they have their Reward they looked for, even the Applause of Men; but they have

no ground to expect any Reward from God, who never accepts any Services, but such as are performed out of sincere Obedience to his Laws, and for the Honour of his Name. And therefore he that would pray acceptably to God, as he must often pray secretly in his Closet, where he cannot have the Applause of Men in his Eye, because none seeth him but GOD: So even in his *publick* Prayers he must act with the same sincere Intentions as if he was in *private*, aiming sincerely at the Glory of God, as the great End for which *publick* Prayers were ordained, and to which they conduce much more than our *private* can; for in *private* none sees us but GOD; but in *publick*, tho' we must not *pray* therefore that Men may see us, yet we cannot *pray*, but some will see us acknowledging God's Goodness, and imploring his Mercy to us, which is much for his Honour and Glory: According to that remarkable Saying of our Blessed Saviour, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven*, Matth. v. 16.

Wherefore they, who sincerely desire to observe all Christ's *Commands*, as becometh good Christians, they must make Conscience of praying *often* every one in his closet, or by himself. But they must not look upon themselves as thereby excused from praying also *publickly* as often as they have Opportunity: For that also, as I have shewn, is elsewhere commanded by him. But rather, if they happen to be brought into such a streight, that it is *morally impossible* for them to perform *both*; they must prefer the *publick* before their *private Devotions*; and in *both*, must take special Care to act with that *Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, as becometh *those* who have to do with an All-seeing GOD, who hates nothing more than *Hypocrisie* and *Deceit*.

The same may be said of those Prayers, which are, or ought to be performed in every Family apart, and by it self, as the great means whereby to keep up the Sense of GOD in it, and to have his Blessing always upon

upon it. For which purpose the *Common Prayer* is certainly the best that can be used as it may all be, except the *Absolution*, by any Master of a Family; who by this means may in a great measure, as to his own Family, supply the Want of the *publick Prayers* of the Church where they cannot be had; but where they may, these *Family-Prayers* should not hinder, but rather make way for them, by fitting the Members of each Family better for the *more solemn* Service of God, in the publick Congregation. It cannot be doubted, but that St. *Peter* and St. *John* prayed both in their Closets, and in their Families every Day; and yet for all that, *They went up together into the Temple at the Hour of Prayer.*

Another Excuse that Men commonly make unto themselves for their neglecting of our daily Prayers, is, because God, 4. *Observation of* as they say, hath given them *six the Lord's Day.* Days to labour in, and hath reserved only *One* for himself; therefore now called *His*, or the *Lord's-day*. But that they solemnly observe, by joining with the *Congregation* in his publick Service; and therefore do not think themselves obliged to do so upon other Days also, whereon God doth not only permit, but require them to follow their respective Callings for the Maintenance of themselves and Families. It is true, he doth so: But it doth not from thence follow, that they need not serve God upon those Days as well as upon *his own*. His Day ought to be spent wholly in his Service, and no other Business to be done upon it, which may as well be done another Day. Upon other Days Men may and ought to mind their particular Callings, as well as their *publick Devotions*; But still these ought to be minded as well as those. No People were ever more strictly commanded to keep the Sabbath than the *Jews* were; yet they were commanded also to serve God publicly twice every Day, by Offering a Sacrifice together with their Prayers every Morning and Evening in the Week. To which there were only

only *two more* extraordinarily added upon the *Sabbath*. And we certainly are as much *bound* to offer up our *prayers* and *praises* unto GOD, as they were to offer up their *Sacrifices* every Day. Otherwise our *Religion*, in the very Point of *Devotion*, would come *short* of theirs, which cannot be supposed, without great Absurdity, by any that understand it, and *know* the Author of it.

But the Vanity of this Excuse appears sufficiently from what I have *discoursed* before, concerning the *Necessity* and *Advantages* of Daily Prayers; and therefore shall say *no more* to it here, but that they who never *perform* their *publick Devotions* unto GOD, but upon his *own* Day, will hardly do it well then: And that all who desire in *good earnest* to keep the *Lord's Day* as they ought, must go to Church at the *Hour of Prayer*, every Day in the Week, if they can.

But some perhaps may say, they cannot do it. They can't spare so much *time* as that requires, from their *worldly* Business, upon the Week-days, without apparent Danger of ruining themselves and Families. Some perhaps may say this: I am sure all cannot. There are many in and about this City, and in the Country too, who have no *worldly Business* to do, or at least *do none* all the Week long. To them every Day is a *Sabbath*, a Day of Rest, wherein they have nothing else to do, but to serve him who hath given them much Leisure on purpose that they might do it. They keep *Holiday* every Day, and therefore should keep every Day *Holy*, or at least so much of it as is necessary for the Offering up their *publick* Prayers and Praises unto GOD who hath so liberally *provided* for them. Otherwise the time that he hath given them will be spent to little purpose, and their Estates, if *possible*, to less. For they will be so far from doing them *any good*, that they will but increase their Misery, if not in this World, as they *often do*, yet most certainly in the next.

And as for such among you as follow some particular calling, I must acknowledge it is no more than what you may and ought to do, so far as it is necessary for the Maintenance of your selves, and those of your own house, and for your being better able to relieve others, and to do good in the World. But I don't think that you can be therefore excused from attending daily upon the publick Worship of God, as often as you can; I say, as often as you can: For I know things may sometimes fall out so, that you cannot do it without very great Inconvenience. And at such times I humbly conceive, you may lawfully be absent without any scruple. But I speak only of the general Course of a Man's Life. As it is said of our Blessed Saviour, that being at Nazareth, he went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day, as his custom was, Luke iv. 16. so it ought to be your usual custom to go every Day to Church at the hours of prayer, notwithstanding any ordinary Business which you may have to do in the mean time; as I doubt not but you yourselves will acknowledge, if you would but seriously consider these few things;

First, Consider, That ye have Souls as well as Bodies, to take care of every Day in the year, and another World to provide for as well as this; an eternal World, where ye must live in Happiness or Misery for ever. And therefore it would be the Height of Folly and Madness to suffer the ordinary Affairs of this Life to hinder you from using the means whereby to obtain Grace and Salvation in the next.

Consider also, that you neither have, nor can have any thing but what you receive from God. It is only his Blessing that maketh rich, Prov. x. 22. And the way to have that, is, to seek it daily of him, and to prefer your Duty to him before all things else; without which, you have no ground to expect it: But by this means you can't fail of it; for you have his own word for it, Mat. vi. 33.

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Again,

Again, *Consider*, You can never get hurt by doing good, nor lose any thing by serving God, except that which is better lost than found. Whilst you are sincerely praying to, or praising him who orders all things in the World, you may be confident, that whatsoever happens to you at that time, shall one way or other turn to your Good; or at least, no real Evil shall befall you. As you see in the Children of Israel, all their Men met together by God's Command, at Jerusalem, at three certain times every Year; whereby the whole Land was left naked and open, without any Defence at those times against their Enemies round about. And yet it is very observable, none ever invaded it, nor ever so much as attempted to do it at any of those times when they were met together before God: As he himself had promised, saying, *Neither shall any Man desire thy Land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord, thrice in the Year*, *Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24.*

Furthermore, *Consider*, None of you, I believe, are so busie all the Day long in your Trades, but you can find time to visit a Friend; and what better Friend can you visit than him, who loved you, and gave himself for you? None of you but can find time to go from your own into your Neighbours, or perhaps to a publick House, and there continue perhaps an Hour or two together: And what House can you go to better than God's? His House of publick Prayer? And where can you spend an Hour or two in a Day better than there? None of you but can find some time every Day to converse with one Company or other, either about News or Business no way relating to your Trades. And what better Company can you keep? Whom can you converse with better, than him who governs and overrules all the Occurrences of the World? And what better News can you hear, than that which is publickly read to you out of his Holy Word, by one of his own Officers? None of you but can find time every Day, when tired with Business, to divert your selves with some Recreation or other, And where can you find better

better *Diversions*? How can you recreate your Spirits better, than as the *glorified* Saints and Angels do, by praising, admiring, adoring the *Eternal God*, the *Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne in Heaven*? In short, if you have no time, for a *whole Day* together, to mind any thing else but your particular Calling, I heartily pity you: If you have, I am sure you can no way spend it better, than by *going into the House of God at the Hour of Prayer*.

And besides, you, who fear that you may *lose* something by it, I desire you to consider how much you may *lose* 9. *Loss of temporal Things*. Unless you go. If *Anna* the Prophetess had not been in the

House of God at the Hour of Prayer, when Christ was first brought thither, she had lost the sight of her *Saviour*, the most blessed sight that ever Mortal saw, *Luke ii. 37, 38*. If *St. Paul* had not been *praying in the Temple*, he had lost that *Heavenly Trance* or *Extasie*, wherein Christ himself appeared and spake to him, *Acts xxii. 17*. If *St. Peter* and *St. John* had not gone *into the Temple at the Hour of Prayer*, they had lost the happy *Opportunity* of working a great *Miracle*, and of converting about *five thousand Persons* to the Faith of Christ. And those *five thousand Persons*, if they had not been there at that time, they might have lost their Souls, and have been *undone* for ever. So here, suppose you should happen to *lose* something by leaving your Shops or Trades a while to come to Church and serve God there, you may *lose* ten times more, yea, ten thousand times more by *not doing* of it. The utmost that you can *lose* by coming to Church, is only the taking or getting a little *Money*, which may do you more *hurt* than *good*. But by not coming, you will lose the Pleasure of *praising* and *magnifying* him that made you: You will lose the *Honour* of conversing with him at his *own House*, and in his most *special presence*; you will *lose* the Profit you might receive from his holy *Word* there read; you will *lose* the Benefit of all the *Prayers* which are there made: you may *lose*

the Love and Favour of God, and his Blessing upon what you have; you may lose that clear Sight and Sense of his *Divine Goodness*, which he has often been pleased to give his People, by *lifting up the Light of his countenance upon them* while they are before him; you will lose the Satisfaction of having done your Duty and pleased God. Indeed, you may lose you know not what, nor ever will know 'till ye cast up your Accompts at the last Day, and state your *Profit* and *Loss* impartially on both sides. Then you will clearly see, that the *Losses*, which you sustained by the Neglect of your daily Devotions, were infinite and inestimable, and that all the Profits you got by it, were meer Cyphers, signifying nothing at all.

Next to this, you may consider also, that you are so happy, as to live in a Place, where the *Prayers* are read most Hours of the Day. So that if you cannot order your Affairs so as to go at one Hour, you may go at another. And both *Morning and Evening Prayer* do not take up much above *an Hour*, or an Hour and a half in a Day; and it is much if you cannot find so much Time in a whole Day wherein to *serve* and *worship* him, who gives you all the time you have. And if some of a Family happen to be so necessarily employ'd for a whole Day together, that they cannot, yet it is rare but others may be spared to go to Church at the *Hours of Prayer*. There is no Master or Mistress of a Family, but may, if they cannot come themselves, at least send some that belong to them, that so the *Family* may have some share in our Prayers if they will. They that will not do so much as that, have little Cause to pretend any Love to God, to Christ, to their own, or to any other Souls that he hath purchased with his own Blood.

Above all, consider the great End of your coming into, and living in the World. God did not make you only to *eat* and *drink*, much less to *moil* and *toil* for *Food* and *Raiment*. It is true, he having made such things necessary for the Preservation of your Life, he doth not only *permit*, but *require* you to make use of all lawful Means for the getting of them.

But

But still they are only the *Means*, not the *End* of your Living. And as you do not live only to *eat*, but you *eat* to *live*: So you live not for your own Sakes, but for his who gives you Life; even for the sake of God, who gave you Life at first by his Word without any Means, and still *continues* it to you by the same *Word* in the use of the *foresaid* Means, and all for *himself*, for his *own Honour and Glory*. Which therefore is, or ought to be the great End of your *eat- ing and drinking*, and of all and every Action of your whole Life. As we learn from his Apostle, saying, *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. This therefore is the great *End* of your coming into the World, and the great Work you have to do in it, even to *promote* his *Glory* all you can. But in doing this Work, you will also *work out your own Salvation*: For it hath pleased God of his infinite Goodness, to join your *Works* and your *Ways*, his *Glory* and your *Happiness* so inseparably together, that you cannot do one without the other; nor attain either but ye shall have both. So far as ye advance *God's Glory*, so far ye advance your own *Happiness*. If you *glorifie* him, he will *glorifie* you, though not for any Virtue or Merit there is in any thing you do for him, all you do being infinitely short of what ye owe him; yet by the Merits of that Death which his Son hath suffered, and by Virtue of that Intercession he always makes for those who finish the Work which he hath given them to do, even *glorifie God in the World*.

Wherefore, as ever you desire, as I *hope* you all do, not to live in vain, and *to no purpose*, but to do the Work which ye were sent hither about; you must make it your chief Care and Study every Day, and neglect no *Opportunities* that ye can get, of promoting the *Glory of GOD*, and in that your *own Happiness*. But there is nothing you can do every Day, that conduceth more to that End, than our *publick Devotions*: For by them, as I have shewn already, we both set forth *GOD's Glory*, and forward *our own Salvation*. And

therefore they ought, in *Reason* as well as *Duty*, to be preferred before your Ordinary Affairs, as being of *more consequence* to the main End of your Living, than any thing else that you *commonly* do. In other Cases you yourselves always make lesser *Businesses* give way to greater. At any time you'll neglect the getting a Penny rather than lose a Pound. And whatsoever *Work* you have upon your Hands, you'll lay it aside to feed your *Bodies*, your frail and *mortal Bodies*, two or three times a Day, because you think *that* to be more necessary *Work*. And do not you think it as necessary to take care of your *Souls* as of your *Bodies*? and to *serve* God, as to *feed* yourselves every Day? Yea, is not this *the better Part? the one thing needful?* I am sure you cannot deny it: for Christ himself hath said it, *Luke x. 42.* And therefore you can't but acknowledge, that this ought to be done in the first Place. So that all the *common Affairs* of this Life ought both in *Reason* and *Conscience* to give place, as much as is possible, to your *serving God*, so as that your *Souls* may live and be happy for ever.

If you would but keep these things always in your Mind, you would never suffer any slight *Occasion* to keep you either from your *private* or *publick Devotions*: You would not consider whether you can *spare time* from minding the *World* to *serve God*, but whether you can *spare time* from *serving God* to *mind the World*; not what you may *lose* by going to Church, but what you may *lose* by staying at *Home*: And so would need no other *Monitor* to put you every Day in Mind of going to the *House of God*, as the *Apostles* did, *at the Hour of Prayer.*

But after all, I fear there are but few will do it; but few of *those* also who have *now* heard it to be their Duty. They think it *enough* that they have been *bearing*; as for *practising*, that they do not love to think of. But I heartily wish that such Hearers would consider what St. Paul saith; *Not the Hearers of the Law are just before God, but the Doers of the Law shall be justified, Rom. ii. 13.* What St. James saith, *Be ye Doers*

Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own selves, Jam. i. 22. What Christ himself saith, That Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many Stripes, Luke xii. 47. and what they themselves can say for themselves at the last Day. I am sure they cannot plead Ignorance; for they have been now sufficiently told of it. And what other Excuses they can make besides those which have been already answered, I can't imagine, except it be one which is not worth answering; but that it will give us Occasion to explain the Way and Manner of performing our daily Devotions aright, to God's Glory, and our own good. And for that purpose it may not be amiss to take notice of it. In short, therefore, it is this: Some perhaps may say, that they have been sometimes at our daily Prayers, but never found themselves any better 7. *Want of Edification.*
for it, and therefore don't think it worth their while to go any more.

This, I must confess, may seem a notable Argument to such as measure their Duty only by their Profit; and think it not worth their while to do any thing for God, unless they can get something to themselves by it. But I would have such to know, that GOD is their Maker; and they are therefore bound to do what he commands, whether they can get any thing by it or no. If he gives them any thing, they must thank him for it: For they are still but *unprofitable Servants*, they have done no more than what was their Duty to do, Luke xvii. 10. nor so much, if they do it only for their own Advantage. For it is *their Duty*, not only to do what he commands, but to do it *therefore*, because he commands it, in sincere Obedience to him and his Supreme Authority over all things. Unless they do that, they have no ground to expect any thing from him, for what they do, but *Wrath and Judgment* for not doing

Answered by an Account of the Manner how we are to perform the publick Devotions.

doing it as they ought. And how much soever they do, and how well soever they do it, he is not obliged to them, but they to him for it; it being only by his Power they can do it at all, and by his Grace only they do it well. And therefore if he consider them for their doing their Duty to him, they must ascribe it wholly to his free Grace and Mercy in Jesus Christ, which whether he is pleased to vouchsafe unto them or no, they are still bound to *obey* and *serve* him as much as if he did; and that too, not with respect to their own *Profit*, but to his Will and Pleasure.

I speak not this, as if we could ever *serve God for nought*: For we can never do any thing for him, but it will most certainly redound by his Goodness to our Advantage. But I speak it only to shew the Vanity of this *Excuse* that some Men make for their neglecting the *publick Devotions*, because they have been sometimes at them, but do not perceive themselves any *better* for it. But after all, I am much of their Mind, I do not think that they are, or can be much the better, for attending upon the *publick Worship* of GOD only *sometimes*. For it is plain, that they who do it only *sometimes*, do it only by the by, when they have no great matter else to do. They do not make it their Work, or Business, and therefore cannot expect any Reward for it; nor *get* any good at all, much less, so much as to be made *better* by it.

The solemn *Praying*, and *Praising* GOD, and *Reading* and *Hearing* his most Holy Word *read*, and so his Divine Will published and declared in his own House, by one of his own *Ministers*, are the Ordinary Means of Grace. But they *work* not by any Virtue inherent in themselves, but by the Power of Christ's *Holy Spirit*, which, according to his promise, abides continually in his *Church*, assisting and actuating the said Means, when duly administered in it, so as to make them effectual to the End for which they were ordained. And therefore they, who would attain that End, must use those Means, not only now and then, but constantly, or at least, as often as they can. They must *watch daily*

at the Gates of Wisdom, and wait at the Posts of her Doors, if ever they desire to be admitted in, *Prov. viii.* 34. They must live continually under the Influence of GOD's Holy Spirit, moving upon their Souls, as he did upon the Waters in the Creation, 'till he hath brought them into Order, and *created them again in Jesus Christ* unto good Works. Otherwise they have no ground to expect to be made *New Creatures*. It is not a Man's going in the right Way sometimes, but his walking in it, that will bring him to his Journey's End. Our *publick* Devotions are the Way, the right Way that leads to the Grace of GOD: But he that would come at the End, so as to have the Grace of GOD always sufficient for him; he must not only step into this Way sometimes, but he must keep always in it, as much as it is possible, so as to let slip no Opportunity he can get of going to the House of GOD at the *Hour of Prayer*. Neither is that all; it is not enough to go into the House of God at the *Hour of Prayer*, but when he is there, he must do the Work of that *Time* and *Place*, and nothing else. He must not stand looking about him, as if he had nothing to do there; neither must he suffer his Thoughts to wander about upon other Things, like those the Prophet speaks of, saying, *And they come unto thee as the People cometh, and they sit before thee as my People, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their Mouth they shew much love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness, Ezek. xxxiii, 31.* Such People had as good be out of the Church as in it, for any good they either do, or get there. Indeed they are not wholly in it; only their worser Part, their Bodies, are there, their Souls are at Home in their Shops, among their Chapmen or Neighbours, or running about the Country, perhaps as far as the *Indies*, minding their Affairs there. And how can such People expect to be ever the better for being in *God's House*, when they affront him to his Face, making a shew, as if they served him, when really they are about other Business! Yet this is the Case of most of those who

go

go thither only sometimes; for not being used to that kind of Work, they dont know how to set about it, much less to keep their Minds so intent upon it as is necessary to the due performance of it.

The Work we have to do in *God's House*, is a great Work, the greatest we can ever do; it is *God's* own Work, the Work he tells us we do for himself, even to *serve*, and *worship*, and *glorifie* him, that made both our Souls and Bodies; and therefore both our Souls and Bodies must be wholly employed in it. As for our Bodies, he hath given us this general Rule, *Keep thy Foot when thou goest into the House of God*, Eccles. v. i. that is, Look to thy Ways, Take care of thy Outward Carriage and Deportment: See thou behave thyself in *God's* House as becometh one, who believeth himself to be in the Presence of the greatest Person in the World. For so we are whensoever we meet together in *God's* House, we are in his *special Presence*. He himself hath said, that *he is in the midst of us*; and therefore we are bound to believe it; and to shew we do so, by all such reverent and humble Gestures before him, as we should certainly use, if we saw him with our *Bodily* Eyes: Especially when we *pray* unto him, we must do it upon our *Knees*, as we should if we put up a Petition but to an Earthly Prince: How much more to the King of all Kings! And when we *Praise* his Holy Name, although we do it *standing*, yet that also must be done in such a Posture of Adoration, as may testify our *Fear* and *Reverence* of his Divine Majesty. Some perhaps may think

And what is the true religious Worship. these to be meer *Ceremonies*; but I am sure that *Kneeling* and *Bowing* to Almighty God, is that which

the Holy Scriptures mean by *worshipping* of him, and therefore forbid us to do it to any in a *religious* Manner, but to the true God. And as this is the Way to *worship* God with our *Bodies*, so it is the means we can use, whereby to keep our *Souls* too in a *pious* and *devout* Temper before him. For by this means we are all the while put in Mind of that glorious

glorious Person we are speaking to, and of the great Work we are about; which otherwise we should be apt to forget: As we have too much cause to fear they do, who speak to God in the same Posture as they do to one another: I say, speak, not *pray*; for that is the Work of the *Heart*, as well as of the *Mouth*. And if their Hearts were upon God, while they are speaking to him, I do not see how it is possible for them not to fall down and worship before him.

But we must remember, that *God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and Truth*, John iv. 24. that is, at the same time that they worship God with their *Bodies*, they must do it also in their *Spirits*, without which all their *Bodily Worship* will signifie nothing. For *Worship*, properly so called, is nothing else but some outward Sign of our inward Fear of God. But where there is no Fear of God in the *Spirit*, there cannot be truly any outward Sign of it. And therefore such cannot be said to *worship God in Truth*, who do not Worship him in their *Spirits* as well as their *Bodies*.

Here then is the great Task we have to do in all our *publick Devotions*, even to keep our Spirits or Hearts in a right Posture all the while that we are before God, who sees them, and takes special notice of all their *Motions*: That we may *pray with the Spirit, and pray with the Understanding also*, as St. Paul did, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. I call this a *great Task*, because I know it is the hardest Work we have to do. Our *Thoughts* being so very quick and nimble, so unconstant and desultory, that it is difficult to keep them close to the Work we are about, so as to serve the Lord without Distraction. But it is a thing that must be done, if we desire to receive any real *Benefit* and *Comfort* from our Devotions. And blessed be God, by his Assistance we may all do it if we will but set ourselves in good earnest about it, and observe these few Rules, which may be very helpful unto us in it.

First, When you go to the House of God *at the Hour of Prayer*, be sure to leave all worldly Cares
and

60 *The Necessity and Advantage*

and Business behind you, entertaining yourselves, as ye go along, with these, or such

Rules for Worshipping God aright, in the Church or House of God. like Sentences of Scripture: *Like as the Hart desireth the Water-brooks, so longeth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul is athirst for God, yea, even the living God.*

When shall I come to appear before the Presence of God? Psal. xlii. 1. 2. *O how amiable are thy Dwellings, thou Lord of Hosts! My Soul hath*

Ejaculations in going thither. *a desire and longing to enter into the Courts of the Lord. My Heart and my Flesh rejoice in the living*

God, Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, We will go into into his Tabernacle, and fall low on our knees before his Footstool, Psal. cxxxii. 7,

When ye come into the Church, say with Jacob, *How dreadful is this Place! This is none other but the House of God; and this is the Gate of Heaven,*

Gen. xxviii. 17. or something to that purpose. And as soon as ye can get an Opportunity, prostrate your

Devout Behaviour. selves upon your Knees before the Master of the House, the great God of Heaven, humbly beseeching him to unite your Hearts un-

to himself, to cleanse your Thoughts by the Inspiration of his Holy Spirit, to open your Eyes, and to manifest himself unto you, and to assist you with such a Measure of Grace in Offering up these your *Spiritual Sacrifices*, that they be acceptable to him by Jesus Christ.

And now set yourselves in good earnest as in God's Sight, keeping your Eye only upon him, looking upon him as observing what you think, as well as what you say or do, all the while you are before him.

While one or more of the *Sentences* out of God's Holy Word, (wherewith we very properly begin our Devotions to him) are reading, apprehend it as spoken by God himself at first, and

At hearing the Sentences.

and now repeated in your Ears, to put you in mind of something which he would have you to *believe* or *do* upon this Occasion.

While the *Exhortation* is reading, hearken diligently to it, and take particular notice of every Word and Expression in it, as contrived on purpose to prepare you for the Service of God, by possessing your Minds with a due Sense of his *special Presence* with you, and of the great Ends of your coming before him at this time.

Reading the Exhortation.

While you are *confessing* your Sins with your Mouth, be sure to do it also in your Hearts, calling to mind every one as many as he can of those particular *Sins* which he hath committed, either by *doing what he ought not to do*, or *not doing what he ought*, so as to repent sincerely of them, and steadfastly to resolve never to commit them any more.

During the Confession.

While the *Minister* is pronouncing the *Absolution* in the Name of God, every one should lay hold upon it for himself, so as firmly to *believe* that upon true Repentance and Faith in Christ, he is now discharged and *absolved* from all his Sins, as certainly as if God himself had declared it with his own Mouth, as he hath often done it before, and now by his *Minister*.

On Receiving Absolution.

While you, together with the *Minister*, are repeating the *Psalms* or *Hymns* to the Honour and Glory of God, observe the *Minister's* Part as well as your own; and lift up your *Hearts* together with your *Voices* to the highest Pitch you can, in acknowledging, magnifying and praising the infinite Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, and Glory of the most High God in all his Works, the *Wonders that he hath done* and still *doth for the Children of Men*, and for you among the rest.

While the Psalms or Hymns are repeating.

While God's *Word* is read in either of the Chapters, whether of the Old or New Testament, receive it not as the Word of Men, but (as it is in Truth) the Word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe, 1 Thess. ii. 13. And therefore hearken to it with the same Attention, Reverence and Faith, as you would have done if you had stood by Mount Sinai, when God proclaimed the *Law*, and by our Saviour's Side, when he published the *Gospel*.

While the *Prayers* or *Collects* are reading, altho' you ought not to repeat them aloud, to the disturbance of other People, yet you must repeat them in your Hearts, your Minds accom-

panying the Minister from one *Prayer* to another, and from one part of each *Prayer* to the other, all along with Affections suitable to the Matter sounding in your Ears, humbly adoring and admiring God according to the Names, Properties or Works which are attributed to him at the Beginning of each *Prayer*, earnestly desiring the good Things which are asked of him in the Body of it, for yourselves or others; and stedfastly believing in *Jesus Christ* for his granting of them, when he is named, as he is at the End of every *Prayer*, except that of St. *Chrysostome*; because that is directed immediately to *Christ* himself, as promising that when Two or Three are gathered together in his Name, he will grant their Requests, which is therefore very properly put at the End of all our daily *Prayers*, and also of the *Litany* (most part whereof is directed also to our Saviour) that when we

The *Blessing* given. have made all our common Supplications unto him, we may act our Faith in him again for God's granting of them according to his said Promise; and so may be dismissed with the Grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Love of God, the Father, and the Communion or Fellowship of the Holy Ghost; under which are comprehended all the Blessings

Blessings that we have, or can desire, to make us completely happy both now and for ever.

After the *Blessing* it may be expedient still to continue for some time upon your *Knees*, humbly beseeching Almighty God to pardon what he hath seen amiss in you since you came into his Presence; and that he would be graciously pleased to hear the *Prayers*, and to accept of the *Praises* which you have now offered up unto him, through the Merits of *Jesus Christ* our only Mediator and Advocate.

These few *Directions* I thought good to lay before you, as being of great Use towards the right Performance of your *publick* Devotions, so as that they may be both *acceptable* to God, and *profitable* to yourselves. I fear some may think it hard to keep their Minds intent so long together; but they can do it much longer upon world-

ly Affairs, and therefore may in this too, if they *will*. If they *will*. There lies the main Stress

of the Business. If Men will resolve by God's Assistance to fix their Minds upon him and his *Service* while they are before him, they may certainly do it in an high Degree; as I do not doubt but many here present have found by their own Experience: Such, I mean, who have been long accustomed to it. And tho' to others it may seem *difficult* at first; yet by Use it will soon grow easie, if they will be perswaded to make Tryal of it, which I heartily wish you would all do. Try a little what it is to go to the House of God *every Day at the Hour of Prayer*, and there to perform your Devotions to him with all your Hearts, as near as you can. Do but use yourselves to it for one quarter or half a Year; and I dare say you will find it not only easie, but so *pleasant* and *profitable* to your Souls, that you will never leave it off so long as you are able to do it. And tho' you can-

*A willing Mind,
a great Help to true
Devotion.*

not do every thing so well as you would, at first, let not that discourage you; but strive to do it as well as you can; and then by his Assistance, who is there *especially present* with you, by degrees you'll overcome all Difficulties, and learn to use those blessed Means of Grace, so as to *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* every Day more and more.

And indeed, unless you do that, you may be confident you do not use them aright. For there are so many Promises made to them by him who cannot lye, that if there be no failure in the Use, they can never fail of their Effect. Inasmuch that if notwithstanding your frequenting our *Daily Prayers*, you shall still continue in any known Sin; if you do not gather Strength to overcome *the World, the Flesh, and the Devil*; if you do not increase in the Knowledge and Love of God; in Temperance, Patience, Meekness and Humility; in Justice, Charity, and all manner of Virtue: In short, if you do not live more soberly, more righteously, and more godly in this present World, than otherwise you would; you may be sure, that although you live under the Means of Grace, you do not make that Use of them which you might, and ought to do; though you seem to perform your *Devotions* to God, yet really you do it not. How oft soever your *Bodies* may be at Church, your *Hearts* are always somewhere else. And so you come to no purpose at all; or rather to very ill purpose. For this is plainly to mock God, and to play the Hypocrites with him, making as if you

had a Mind to *serve and glorifie* him, when you mind nothing less, but rather to do him all the *Dis-service and Dishonour* that you can, by giving Occasion to the Enemy to blaspheme his Holy Name, and to think it is to no purpose to serve God, seeing you, who seem to do it, are as bad as other People.

And besides, hereby you may discourage many, who otherwise would be inclined to set upon a pious and religious

religious Course of Life. For when they observe any of you, who come to Church every day, guilty of the same Vices as they who never come at all, they will be tempted to judge that all are so; and by consequence that there is nothing in Devotion, but a meer outward Shew, and *Appearance* of Religion; and that they who go to Church do it not to serve God, but themselves, to get themselves the Name and Reputation of being pious and godly Men, and under that Cloak to hide their Faults, and commit all manner of Villany, as some sort of Men we know of later Years have done, to the Scandal and Reproach of the Christian Religion. So that by this means your very Coming to Church would be more for the *Devil's* Service, than for *GOD's*. The Devil always had, and always will have a spight at our *publick* Devotions, and catch at all Opportunities to throw Dirt in their Face, to make them appear as deformed and ugly as they can. And if any of those who frequent *GOD's House*, and seem to serve him there, should notwithstanding lead wicked and profane Lives; they would promote the same hellish *Design* of bringing Devotion into Contempt and Scorn; and so would do the Devil's Work, and must expect their Wages from him at last.

But, Beloved, we are perswaded better things of you, and Things that accompany Sal-

vation, though we thus speak, Heb. vi. 9. And although some of those who come to Prayers only now and then, when they have nothing else to do, may perhaps be the Devil's Drudges in this Matter; yet I cannot imagine how they should be so, who make it their Business to serve God publickly every Day. For that must needs give a Check to any evil Motions, and leave such a Tincture upon their Minds, that will break and shew itself in all *holy Conversation and Godliness*. And therefore I speak this only to shew how much it concerns you to take care

Exhortation to all Members of the Church of England, that they live as holily as they pray devoutly.

how you live, and, for that purpose, how you pray: That your Lives may in all points be such as *becometh the Gospel of Christ*; that you may *adorn your Profession* with all virtuous and good Works; that you may shine as Lights in the World: So that Men may see there is more in going every day to Church, than they are aware of, and so may be persuaded to follow you thither *at the Hour of Prayer*.

But for that purpose, whenever ye go thither, ye must be sure to do the Work ye go about as well as possibly you can: For the better you serve God there, the better you will do it every where else; the more serious and hearty you are at your *publick Devotions*, the more righteous and holy you will be in *all manner of Conversation both towards God and towards Men*. For as these are in themselves some of those *Duties* which we owe to God, so they are the Means too which he hath appointed, whereby to give us Grace to perform all the rest. And the more carefully we use the *Means*, the more Grace we shall get by them. So that by this means we may *add to our Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godliness; and to Godliness, Brotherly-kindness; and to Brotherly-kindness, Charity*, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. Neither shall we only add one Grace to another, but also one Degree of every Grace unto another. *We shall go from strength to strength, 'till we come in the Unity of the Faith, and the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*, Eph. iv. 13.

This is a great Truth: But I would not have you take it only from me, but from your selves: And for that purpose make the Experiment. Take all the Occasions, you can get, of going into the House of God at the *Hours of Prayer*, and to his *Table*, when his Supper is there administred, and perform the several *Duties* which are there required of you, with all the Care and Diligence that you can. Do but this,
and

and you will find all that I have said, to be not only true, but short of what you your selves will feel ; and so will be soon convinced by your own Experience, that *Weekly Sacraments*, and *Daily Prayers* are the greatest Blessings you can have on this side Heaven, and the best Way to bring you thither, through the Merits of *Jesus Christ*. To whom, &c.

F I N I S.



T H E



THE GREAT
Necessity and Advantage
O F
Frequent Communion.

I Cor. xi. 26.

For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death 'till he come.



THE Lord's Death, here spoken of is the Death of the Lord, the Almighty and Eternal Son of God ; *that Death,* which he suffered in the Nature, and in the stead of Mankind in general, and particularly of us who are here present ; *that Death,* whereby he expiated our Sins, and made compleat Satisfaction to the Divine Truth and Justice for them : *That Death,* whereby he appeased the Wrath which he that made us had justly conceived against us, and hath reconciled him again unto us : *That Death,* whereby he delivered us from the Slavery of Sin and Satan, and asserted us into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God : *That Death,* whereby he redeemed us from the

The Commemoration of the Death of Christ,

Curse

Curse of the Law, being made himself a Curse for us : That Death, whereby he purchased for us both Pardon, and Peace, and Mercy, and Grace, and Power to eschew Evil and do Good ; and all the Blessings we can ever have or desire, either in this World or the next : That Death, by virtue whereof he entred into Heaven, now to appear in the Presence of GOD for us, and therefore is able to save to the utmost them that come unto GOD by him; seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25. This is that Lord's Death, which the Apostle here said, we shew, as often as we eat the Bread, and drink the Cup he speaks of in the Verses before my Text ; where he saith, that the Lord Jesus, the same Night in which he was betrayed, took Bread ; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat : This is my Body which is broken for you : This do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the Cup, when he had supped, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood : This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. In which Words we have Christ's own Institution of the Sacrament of his Last Supper, together with the End of it declared by himself, saying at the Institution of the Bread, *This do in remembrance of me :* And again at the Cup, *This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me,* that is, (as is signified by the Institution it self) in remembrance of me, as dying for the Sins of the World, and yours among the rest. And that this is the great End of this Holy Institution, the Apostle farther proves, and explains in the Words of my Text, from this Reason ; because hereby we shew the Lord's Death : The Bread shews the breaking of his Body, the Cup shews the shedding of his Blood ; and so both together shew the Death he suffered for us. For as often, saith he, as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come.

The end of this Holy Institution of the Sacrament, the Communion, the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, as 'tis diversly styl'd.

In

In which Words we may first observe, That every time that the *Sacrament* of the

I. Hence *Christ's Death is declared at every Administration.* Lord's Supper is administred, his *Death* is thereby shewn and declared to all that are there present. As when the *Jews* ate the Paschal Lamb, the Master of the Family declared the Reasons why they ate it with *bitter Herbs*, and why with *unleavened Bread*, and the like.

So here, when we eat the Bread, and drink the Cup, according to Christ's Institution, we thereby declare the Reasons of it, though not by *Words*, yet by the very *Act* itself, and the several *Circumstances* of it. By the *Breaking of the Bread*, we declare Christ's Body to be broken and wounded to Death: By the *Cup*, we declare his Blood to be shed, or poured out for the Sins of the *World*; and by distributing both the *Bread* and the *Cup* to each Communicant a-part, we declare to every one particularly that Christ died for his Sins, and that he may be saved by *Christ's Death*, if he will but receive and apply it to himself as he ought, by a quick and lively Faith.

In the next place, we may here observe, that the Apostle doth not say, that *Christ's*

II. *Christ's Death is not repeated, but shew'd forth in every Administration.* *Death* is repeated, or that he is offered up again every time this Sacrament is administred, but only that the Lords *Death* is shewn by it. And therefore that this is not, as the Papists absurdly ima-

gine, a *Propitiatory Sacrifice for the Living and the Dead*, but only *commemorative and declarative* of that One Sacrifice which Christ once offered to be a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. We may here likewise observe, that the Apostle doth not say, *as often as ye eat this Bread, ye shew the Lord's Death*; but ye do it, *as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup*. And therefore unless both kinds be administred, as Christ's *Institution* is not observed, so neither is the *End* of it attained:

attain'd: For his *Death* is not shewn by any one, but by both together.

Moreover, we may observe that the Apostle here plainly calls it *Bread*, and the *Cup* or *Wine*; not the *very Body* and *Blood* of Christ: Yea, he saith, it is *Bread* we eat, and it is the *Cup*, or *Wine* we drink; and therefore we do not eat the *very Body* that hung upon the *Cross*, nor drink the *Blood* which was there spilt for us; but only in a *Sacramental Sense*, which quite overthrows the *Doctrine of Transubstantiation*.

Again, we may from hence observe, that this was no temporary Institution, which

was to continue only for some time, but to the End of the World; or, as the Apostle here expresses it, *'till He, our Lord and Saviour, come*. As from the Beginning of the World, as often as

III. *The Commemoration of Christ's Death is not temporary, but to be perpetual.*

they offered, according to its first Institution, any bloody Sacrifice to God, they thereby *foreshewed* the *Death* of Christ, typified by it, until his first coming into the World to save it. So since that time, *as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup*, according to Christ's own Institution, *we shew forth his Death* all along, until his second Coming into the World to Judge it. So that it is now by this *Sacrament* that Mankind is, and always must be, put in mind of their Saviour, and what he suffered for them; and therefore this can never be laid aside, but must continue in the Church to the End of the World. Neither can that be reckoned any Part of *Christ's Church*, where this his own most Holy Institution is rejected, disused, or never observed as it ought.

Lastly, We may here observe, that as *this Sacrament* is to *continue always* in the Church; so it must be often repeated by the same Persons in it. The other Sacrament, even *Baptism*, is likewise to be *always administered* in the Church; but it can be admi-

VI. *The Commemoration of Christ's Death is not only to be continued, but often repeated.*

nistrated

nistred but once to one and the same Person : But the Apostle here, speaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, saith to the same Persons, *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup* : And to the same purpose our Lord himself in the Institution of the *Cup*, saith, *This do ye as oft as ye drink it* : Plainly implying, that this should be often done by those who are once admitted into his Church : As a Man can be *born* but once, but when he is *once* born, he must *often* eat and drink such things as God hath appointed for the Preservation of his Natural Life ; so when a Man is *once regenerate*, and born again of *Water* and of the *Spirit*, he must *often* eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, as the great Means appointed by Christ himself for the Preservation of his Spiritual Life ; which can never be supported aright without this *Spiritual Food*, no more than the Natural Life can without *Bodily Sustenance*.

This therefore is that which I intend by God's Assistance, in a more especial Manner to speak to at this time. And it is but time to say all we can of it,

when *this Holy Sacrament* is so generally neglected, as it now is (to our shame be it spoken) all the Kingdom over. Blessed be God, except some few *Heathens* which

*Complaint of the
general Neglect of
the Holy Sacrament.*

are among us, such I mean, as were never yet *baptized*, the Nation in general is *Christian*, the People all profess *Christ's Religion*, and have it establish'd among them by *Civil Laws* and *Sanctions* : They are all admitted into *Christ's Church*, and hope to be saved in it : They all believe him to be the *Only Saviour* of the World, and therefore expect Salvation only from him. They all know too, or at least have heard, that he *instituted* this *Holy Sacrament*, and commanded them to receive it in *Remembrance* of him : And yet after all, they regard it no more than as if it had never been *instituted* by him ; no more than as if it was no matter whether they ever *remembered* him or no. I need not go far for Instances. In this Place, where it is as constantly administred, and as much frequented as
in

in any Part of the Kingdom, there are *several* who receive it very seldom; some never, unless it be to qualifie them for an Office: Many, a great many I fear, of those who are now present, never yet received it at all: But tho' they be 20, 30, 40, 50 Years old and upwards, yet have lived all this while in the Neglect of this *Divine Institution*, having never been so much as once at our *Lord's Table*, nor knowing what it is to partake of that most Blessed *Body and Blood* which was broken and shed for them. And so it is in all Parts of the Kingdom; which is a very sad and melancholy Consideration, They who have any Love either for *GOD* or their Neighbours, cannot but be grieved at their Hearts to think of it. We have only *One Saviour* in the World, and he hath instituted only *one Sacrament* to put us always in mind of him; and yet that People, that *Christians* should slight that! What shall I say? I know not how to express their *Folly and Ingratitude*, much less the dismal Consequences of it. But how to remedy it, I

know not. I have done what I could: I have taken all occasions to convince you of your Sin and Danger, in neglecting this *Blessed*

The Folly and Ingratitude of such Neglect.

Sacrament, and to perswade you to a more frequent Receiving of it; but I see nothing will do: Indeed nothing can do it but the Almighty Power of *GOD*, whom I therefore beseech of his Infinite Mercy, to open Mens Eyes, that they may *see the things that belong to their everlasting Peace, before they be hid from them*. And then I am sure this Sacrament would be as much *frequented*, as it hath been hitherto *neglected*. But seeing he is usually pleased to do this great Work by the Ministry of his Word, I shall make it my Business at this time, in his Name to put you in mind of your *Duty and Interest* in this particular, and so set before you such Reasons why you ought to take all Opportunities of receiving the *Mystical Body and Blood* of Christ your Saviour, as I hope by his Blessing may

H

prevail

prevail with many to do it: G O D grant it may do so with all that hear me at this time.

For this purpose, therefore, I desire you to consider,

Reasons why Christians ought to receive often.

tation for your sakes.

I. 'Tis *Christ's own Institution and Command.*

First, that this is Christ's own Institution and Command. He, who being in the form of G O D, thought it no Robbery to be equal with G O D, and yet made himself of no Reputation for your sakes. He who loved you so, as to give himself for you. He, who laid down his own Life, to redeem and save you. He, the very Night before he died for you, He then instituted this Holy Sacrament; and He then said to all that hoped to be saved by him,

and to you among others, Do this in remembrance of me. And do this as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me: What? and will you that hope to be saved by him, will you never do this at all? Or only now and then, when perhaps you have nothing else to do? How then can ye hope to be saved by him? Do ye think that he will save you, whether ye observe his Commands or no? And which of all his Commands can ye ever observe, if ye do not observe this, which is so plain, so easie, so useful, and so necessary for you? No, deceive not your selves: He that came into the World, and died on purpose to save you, you may be confident would never have required you to do this, and as often as you do it, to remember Him; but that it is necessary for your Salvation that ye do it, and that ye do it as often as ye can, in remembrance of him. And if it had been necessary in no other, as it is in many respects, yet his very commanding it, makes it so to you, and to your Salvation. For as He is the only Author of eternal Salvation, He is so only to those who obey him, Heb. v. 9. that is, to those who observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded, Matth. xxviii. 20. But this is one of those things which he hath commanded; and therefore unless you do this, you do not obey him, and so have no ground to expect Sal-

vation

vation from him. He himself hath told you in effect, that he will not save you, in that he said, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*, Luke xiii. 3, 5. But ye all know, that he who lives in any wilful and known Sin, or in the wilful Neglect of any known Duty, he hath not yet *repented*, and turned to G O D, but is still in his natural Estate, in a State of Sin and Damnation. And if he happens to die so, he must inevitably perish; there is no help in the World for it.

Wherefore, my Brethren, ye had need look about you. Christ your Saviour hath expressly *commanded* you often to receive the Sacrament of his Body and Blood *in remembrance* of him. And therefore you, who never yet received it, have lived all this while in the wilful Breach of a known Law, and by consequence in a wilful and known *Sin*: And you who receive it but *seldom*, do not fully *obey* or come up to the Law, which plainly requires you to do it *often*: At least if it may be had. It is true, should G O D in his Providence cast you *Not to be dispensed with.* upon a Place where you could not receive it if ye would, I do not doubt, but he would accept of your earnest Desires of it, as well as if ye did receive it; and would make up the great Losses you sustained in your Spiritual Estate for want of it, some other way. But blessed be his great Name, this is not your Case: For he in his good Providence hath so ordered it, that you live in a Place where this *Holy Sacrament* is actually celebrated every *Lord's day*, and may be so, if there be occasion, every *day* in the Year. Our Church requires the *first*, and hath provided for the *other*, by ordering that the *same* *Collèct*, *Epistle* and *Gospel*, which is appointed for the *Sunday*, shall serve all the Week after: And by consequence the whole *Communion Service*, of which they are a Part. And therefore, unless you *receive* it, and receive it *often* too, you will live in the gross Neglect, if not in a plain Contempt of *Christ's Command*; as you will one Day find to your Shame and Sorrow: For how well soever ye may otherwise live, this one

Sin is enough to ruin and destroy you for ever. For, as St. James saith, *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all*, James ii. 10. And therefore, whatsoever else ye do, if ye do not this, but *offend in this one Point*, you are liable to all the Punishments that are threatned in the Law of G O D. Neither is there any way to avoid them, except you repent, and turn from this as well as from all other Sins.

And that ye may not think that the *Receiving* of this *blessed Sacrament* only now and then, as perhaps two or three times a Year, will excuse you from the Imputation of living in the Neglect of *Christ's Command*; I desire you to consider, how the *Apostles* themselves and the *Primitive Christians* understood it. Which

How the Apostles and Primitive Christians understood the Word often in the Institution of the Sacrament.

they sufficiently declared by their Practice. For when our Lord was gone to Heaven, and had, according to his Promise, sent down the *Holy Spirit* upon his *Apostles*, and by that Means brought into his Church about 3000 Souls in one Day, it is said of them, *That they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayer*, Acts ii. 42. and of all that believed, it is said, *That they continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking of Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with gladness and singleness of Heart*, v. 46. Where we may observe, First, that by *breaking of Bread* in the New Testament, is always meant the *Administration* of the Lord's Supper. Secondly, this they are said to have done, *κατ' οἶκον*, from House to House, as we translate it; or rather *in the House*, as the Syriack and Arabick Versions have it, and as the Phrase *κατ' οἶκον*, is used by the Apostle himself, Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. that is, they did it either in some private House where there was a Church, or more probably in some of the Houses or Chambers belonging to the Temple, where they daily continued. Thirdly, as they continued

nued daily in the Temple, at the Hours of Prayer, to perform their solemn Devotions there, so they daily received the Holy Sacrament, and ate this Spiritual Food *with gladness and singleness of Heart*. This being indeed the chief part of their Devotions, whensoever they could meet together to perform them. Especially upon the Lord's day, as the Holy Ghost himself informs us. saying, *And upon the first day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached to them, being ready to depart on the Morrow, Acts xx. 7.* where we see, they did not only break Bread, or administer the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper upon the first Day of the Week, which we, from St. John, call the Lord's day; but upon that Day they came together for that End and Purpose. It is true, St. Paul being to go away next Day, he took that Opportunity when they met together for that End, to give them a Sermon. But that was not their End of their meeting together at that time. They did not come to hear a Sermon, tho' St. Paul himself was to preach, but they came together to administer and receive Christ's Mystical Body and Blood; which plainly shews, that this was the great Work they did every Lord's day: And that they came together then on purpose to meet with Christ, and to partake of him at his own Table. And seeing that the Law itself required that none should appear before the Lord empty, Exod. xxiii. 15. therefore St. Paul requires, that upon the first day of the Week, when Christians thus met together to receive the Sacrament, every one should lay by him in store, as God prospered him, for pious and charitable Uses, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And hence proceeded that Custom which is still continued in our Church, and ought to be so in all, That whensoever we appear before the Lord at his own Table, we, every one according to his Ability, offer up something to him, of what he had bestowed upon us, as our Acknowledgment of his Bounty to us, in giving us whatsoever we have, and of his infinite Mercy in giving himself for us.

Now seeing the *Apostles* themselves, and such as they first converted and instructed in the Faith of Christ, usually received this Holy

That it should be administred and received constantly every Lord's day if not usually every day in the Week.

Sacrament every day in the Week, and constantly upon the Lord's day; it cannot be doubted, but that they looked upon themselves as obliged by Christ's Command to do so: And that when he said, *Do this, as often as ye do it, in remembrance*

of me, his Meaning and Pleasure was, *That they should often do it, as often as they met together to perform their publick Devotion to him, if it was possible, or at least upon the Lord's day.* And as this was the Sense wherein the *Apostles* understood our Saviour's Words; so they transmitted the same, together with the Faith, to those who succeeded them. For *Tertullian*, who lived in the next Century to the *Apostles*, saith, that the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, in *omnibus mandatum à Domino, etiam Antelucanis cœtibus*, was commanded by our Lord, to be celebrated in all *Christian Assemblies* even those which were held before Day, *Tr. de cor. mil. cap. 3.* And before him *Pliny* the Second, who was contemporary with *St. John*, in the Account he gave of the Christians

To which their Practice was conformable.

Manners to the Emperor *Trajan*, saith, among other Things, *That they were wont upon a certain day, to meet together before it was light, and to bind themselves by a Sacra-*

ment, not to do any ill thing, *Plin. Ep. l. 10. cap. 93.* Which can be understood only of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as administred and received by them upon the Lord's day. And *Justin Martyr* himself, who lived in the next Age after, in the *Apology* he wrote to *Antonius Pius* in behalf of the Christians, giving a particular Account of what they did in their publick Congregations, saith, that τῇ τῷ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρᾳ, upon that which is called the Day of the Sun, or Sunday, all *Christians* that live either in the Cities, or in the Country, meet together: Where they hear

Ex-

the Writings of the *Prophets* and *Apostles* read, and an *Exhortation* made to them : And then they having all joined together in their *Common Prayers*, *Bread* and *Wine* is brought and *consecrated*, or *bles'd* by the *President* or *Minister*; and distributed to every one there present, and carried by *Deacons* to such as were absent. *Καὶ ἡ διάδοσις, καὶ ἡ μετέληψις ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑὐχαριστηθῆναι ἐκείνου γίνῃ*. And the Distribution and Participation of the consecrated Elements is made to every one. *Iust. Mart. Apol. 2.* And this Food, saith he, *Καλεῖται παρ' ἡμῶν Ἐυχαριστία*, is called by us the *Eucharist*. From whence it appears, that in *those Days*, every one that was at *Prayers* and *Sermon*, received also the *Holy Sacrament*, at least upon the *Lord's day*. None offered to go out 'till that was over : Or if they did so, they were cast out of the *Church*, as not worthy to be called *Christians* : As appears from the *Apostolical Canons* made or collected much about that time, or soon after : One whereof runs thus, *Πάντας τὰς ἐισιόντας πνεύς, &c.* All Believers that come to *Church*, and hear the Scriptures, but don't stay to join in the *Prayers*, and the *Holy Communion* ought to be *excommunicated*, as bringing Confusion into the *Church*. *Can. Apostol. 9.* It was then, it seems, reckoned a great *Disorder* and *Confusion* for any to go out of the *Church*, as they now commonly do, 'till the *whole Service*, of which the *Communion* was the principal part, was all over : And if any did so, they were judged unfit to come to *Church*, or keep company with *Christians* any longer. This was the *Discipline* of the *Primitive* and *Apostolick Church*. This was the *Piety* of the *first Christians* : And it continued in a great Measure for some Ages, as might easily be shewn. But this may be sufficient at present to prove, that the *Apostles* and *Primitive Christians* did not think that they observed our Lord's *Command* in the *Institution* of this *Holy Sacrament* aright, by receiving it only *now* and *then*. For, as they would never have done it at all, but only in obedience unto that *command*; so in obedience to that *Command*, they took all Opportunities, they could get, of doing it : At least they never omitted it upon the
Lord's

Lord's day. But upon *that day*, whatsoever they did besides, they always did this in remembrance of what their great Lord and Saviour had done for them. And if we de-

*And is a standing
Rebuke to us at this
Day who neglect
an Ordinance of so
great consequence to
Christians.*

fire to be such Christians as they were, we must do as they did. We must, after their *pious* Example, observe our Lord's Command, by *eating this Bread*, and *drinking this Cup as often as we can*; lest otherwise we lose the Benefit of that Death he suffered for us, by

our neglecting to do what he hath *commanded* in remembrance of it. And verily to remember Christ and his Death, is a thing of far greater consequence than People are commonly aware of. The People of God under the Law, by his own Appointment had it *ty-*

*2. As the Jews had
the Death of Christ
typified under the
Law every day by
divers Representa-
tions.*

typified and *represented* to them every day in the Year, by having *two Lambs* offer'd up for a Burnt-offering; the one in the Morning, and the other in the Evening, as a Type of that Lamb of God which *taketh away the Sins of the World*, Exod xxix. 38. Num. xxviii. 3.

John i. 29. These were offer'd every Day besides the Sin offerings, Peace offerings, Trespass offerings, and such like, as were offer'd upon particular Occasions. Wherefore, these two Lambs were called the *continual Burnt-offering*, as being *continually offered* every Day in the Week. And upon the *Sabbath-day* there were two more added, Num. xxviii. 9. So that upon every *Sabbath day* in the Year there were four Lambs offered, that they might be sure at least upon that Day, to think of that *grand Sacrifice* which was to be offered up for them. And it may not be amiss to observe that every one of those Lambs had a Meat and a Drink offering to attend it. A Meat-offering made of Flower, and a Drink offering of Wine; which are both the *same Elements* which Christ himself *instituted* to signify his Body and Blood. And besides the *Burnt offerings*, the

Meat offerings, and Drink offerings every Sabbath day, the High-Priest was to set the Shew-bread upon the Holy Table, and to put Frankincense thereon; which was to continue there before the Lord 'till the next Sabbath, when the Priests had ate Bread, and burnt the Frankincense לאֲכֹרֶה for a Memorial, even an Offering made by Fire unto the Lord, Levit. ii. 4, 5, 9. &c. Ex. xxv. 30. All which, as most things in the Levitical Law, had doubtless some respect or other to Christ: As is intimated in the Law itself, where it is said, that this shall be done by an everlasting Covenant, Lev. xxiv. 8. even that which is founded in Christ. The Bread consisting of twelve Loaves or Cakes (according to the Number of the Tribes of Israel, and of Christ's Apostles) was set upon the Table in two Rows; which might put us in mind of the two Natures in Christ, the Bread of Life which came down from Heaven, John vi. 33, 35. In Hebrew this is called לחם פנים the Bread of the Face, because it was to be set before the Face of GOD continually, Ex. xxv. 30, as Christ continually appeareth in the Presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. Upon this Bread was laid pure Frankincense, called in Hebrew לבונה, Olibanum, from its Whiteness, by reason whereof it was used in Sacrifice as a Symbol of GOD's pardoning Sin, as it was likewise of his acceptance of what was done, by the sweet Scent it made when burnt. This was laid upon the Bread, to be to it for a Memorial, as the Hebrew Words signify, to call to remembrance the Offering made by Fire unto the Lord; that is, the Death of Christ, typified by all such Offerings. The Bread was to be eaten, not burnt; but the pure Frankincense that was laid upon it, was to be burnt, and by its sweet Smell call to mind the Death of Christ, by virtue whereof God smells a sweet Savour, and accepts of the Sacrifices and Services we offer and perform to him, 1 Pet. ii. 5. And all this was to be done, the Bread to be eaten, the Frankincense burnt, and new put in their places, every Sabbath-day throughout the Year; that upon that Day especially Men might be put in mind of their

their Saviour, and accordingly act their Faith on him for their Pardon and Acceptance with God.

There were many such Ways, whereby the People of God in those days were constantly put in mind of what the Saviour of the World was to do, and suffer for them. All which are now laid aside; and only this one Sacrament of his last Supper *instituted* by himself in the room of them. This is now our *Christian* Shew-bread, whereby we *shew the Lord's Death 'till he come*. This is our *Burnt-offering*, our *Sin-offering*, our *Trepass-offering*, our *Thank-offering*, our *Meat-offering*, our *Drink-offering*, and all the Offerings required of us, whereby to *commemorate* our Blessed Saviour, and what he hath done for us. And therefore as the *Jews*

So Christians should much more be punctual and constant in commemorating this one Sacrifice by this Sacrament.

were *punctual* and *constant* in observing all things prescribed to them; for the same End we certainly ought to do this as *often* as we can; this one thing, which answers the *End* of all their Offerings, and yet hath neither the *Trouble*, nor the *Charges*, nor the *Difficulty* of any one of them.

Especially considering that God would never have appointed so many Ways whereby to put them in mind of their Saviour, but that it was necessary for them to have him always in *their Minds*. And it must needs be as necessary for us, as it was for them: Otherwise he who came into the World on purpose to save us, would never have commanded us to *eat this Bread, and drink this Cup in remembrance of him*. But he hath commanded us, not only to do it, but to do it for this very End, that we may *remember* him. And therefore we may be confident, that to remember him, is very necessary to our being saved by him; and by consequence that all who desire to be so in good earnest, must do this so often, as to keep him always fresh in their Minds and Memories. And the reason is plain; for all the Promises of Salvation by Christ are made only to those who *believe* in him: But this Be-

lieving

Believing in him is not a transient Act, or a thing to be done only once or twice; but it is to be the continual Work and Employment of our Lives. As we must constantly believe what he hath taught, so we must constantly trust and depend on him for all things necessary to our Salvation, according to the Promises that he hath made us. He that does not do this, cannot be truly said to believe in Christ at all; or at least, not to any purpose. But it is impossible for us thus constantly to believe in Christ, without keeping him always in our Minds. And it is as impossible for us to keep him thus always in our Minds, without frequent Receiving of this Holy Sacrament: If we could have done so without it, Christ would never have appointed this Sacrament to put us in Mind of him; for he need not have done it.

The plain Case is this: There is no way whereby 'tis possible for any of us to be saved, but by Jesus Christ: Nor by him, without believing in him. And therefore we had need use all the Means we can for the exercising our Faith in him, and keeping it always fix'd upon him. But we can by no means do it so effectually, as by the frequent Receiving of that Holy Sa-

As the best means of exercising our Faith in Christ.

crament which he himself ordained for that very purpose, that we might remember him so as to believe and trust on him for all things relating to our Salvation. For he hath so ordered it, that this Sacrament doth not bring him into our Remembrance only in a slight and superficial manner, without making any Impression upon our Minds: But it exhibits and presents him to our very Eyes as dying for our Sins; or, to use the Apostles Words, *herein Jesus Christ is evidently set forth before our Eyes, as crucified among us*, Gal. iii. 1. whereby our Minds are deeply affected, and our Faith confirmed in him. All the Promises, which God hath made us in Christ, being hereby sealed as it were, and delivered to us in his Blood. As the Sacrament of Circumcision is said to be a Token of the Covenant betwixt

betwixt God and Man, Gen. xvii. 11. and a *Seal of the righteousness of Faith*, Rom. iv. 11. So the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* both *signifies* and *seals* to us the Covenant of Grace founded in the Death of *Christ*, there represented before our Eyes; whereby our *Faith* is strengthened, and we are able to look upon ourselves as intitled to, and interested in all the *Blessings* which are promised in the said *Covenant*, by the means of that *Body* and *Blood* which we there behold as *broken* and *shed* for us. For which purpose also *Christ* himself, in the Institution of it, calls the Signs by the Name of the *Thing signify'd*, saying, *This is my Body which is broken for you, and this is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the Remission of sins*, 1 Cor. xi. 24. Matt. xxvi. 28. Whereby he fully assures us, that this is not *common* Bread and Wine, but his own *Body* and *Blood*, not in a *carnal*, but in a *spiritual*, or *sacramental* Sense: So that by eating this Bread, and drinking this Cup, we partake of his *Body* and *Blood* to all intents and purposes for which the one was *broken*, and the other *shed*; and that too as much, or rather more than we could have done it by *eating* his very *Body*, and *drinking* his very *Blood* in a *carnal* and *literal* Sense. To the same purpose is that of the *Apostle*, *The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? and the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* 1 Cor. x. 16. Though it be not his *very* *Body* and *Blood* it self, it is the *Communion* of them; they are both communicated to us: So that if we receive them as we ought, by *Faith*, we attain the *end* wherefore his *Body* was *broken*, and his *Blood* *shed*, even the *Remission* of our *Sins*. Which is therefore particularly mentioned by himself in the *Institution* of the *Cup*.

And this is that which our Church teacheth in her Catechism, saying, *That the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper*: By the Faithful: By such as have, and act true *Faith*, which, as the *Apostle* saith, *is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things*

not seen. By such the Body and Blood of Christ is *verily and indeed* received ; and only by such. Others see nothing there but Bread and Wine ; but they who have such a Faith in Christ's Word, by it see his Body and Blood there ; their *Faith* itself being the very Evidence thereof to them. The Elements are not *transubstantiated* into the Body and Blood of Christ, as the *Papists* absurdly imagine : But the Substance of the Bread and Wine still continues the same : And therefore without *Faith* no Man can receive any more than plain, tho' *consecrated*, Bread and Wine. But they who have, and at the same time act that *Faith* which is the *Substance of things hoped for*, do by that *verily and indeed* receive the Body and Blood of Christ, according to his Word, when he said, *This is my Body, and this is my Blood*. This Christ said ; and this they believe : And by their *believing* it, have it verified to them. It is to them that Body which was so *broken*, and that Blood which was so *shed* for their Sins. They receive it as such upon Christ's Word : And accordingly partake of all the Merits of it ; whereby their Sins are all as fully remitted to them, as if they themselves had already undergone all the Punishments which the Law had threatned against 'em. For Christ having undergone them all in their stead ; and *He* having now communicated that Body and Blood in which he did it, unto them ; and they having by *Faith* accordingly received it, the Law is now satisfy'd as to them, and can no more require that they should suffer the Punishments which were due unto their Sins, than it can require that Christ's Body and Blood, which they have received, should be *broken* and *shed* again for them.

And as Christ here puts us upon the Exercise of our *Faith*, by calling, what we receive, his *own* Body and Blood ; so he doth likewise by *offering* and *applying* it particularly unto us ; saying in the very *Institution*, to the Apostles, and in them to every sound Member of his Church, *This is my Body which is given for you, and this Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you*, Luke xxii. 19, 20. And therefore in

the Distribution both of the Bread and Cup, according to the Order of our Church, the

And applying his Minister faith to every particular Merits to our selves. Communicant, The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given

for thee, preserve thy Body and Soul to everlasting Life. Take, and Eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee. And so in the Cup; Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee. Which is much to be observed, as being of mighty use to the right exercising our Faith in Christ, and so to our obtaining Pardon and Salvation by him. For Christ is said to have died for Mankind in general; and all the Promises in him are made not to this or that particular Person, but to *All* that believe; and so every one is left to apply them as well as he can to himself. But now in this Holy Sacrament this is done to our Hands. For here Christ himself, by his Minister, assures every particular Person singly and by himself, that his Body was given for him, and his Blood was shed for him or for her, which is an extraordinary Help to our Faith. For by this means every one, upon the Receipt of the Holy Sacrament, hath a fair Occasion, yea, Reason given him to think thus with himself.

*' My Soul doth magnifie the Lord, my Spirit rejoiceth
' in God my Saviour. Blessed be the Eternal Son of
' God! He himself is become my Saviour. He loved
' me, and gave himself for me, even for me also, the
' unworthiest of all his Creatures. His Body was broken,
' his Blood was shed for me, and he hath now given
' it to me, that my Sins may be pardoned, and
' that my Soul may be saved by it. What then if my
' Sins be many? What if my Sins be great? I confess they
' are so, they are very many, and they are very great; but
' I am truly humbled for them, I heartily repent of them,
' I stedfastly resolve by God's Assistance never to return
' any more unto them, but spend the rest of my Life
' wholly in his Service and to his Honour. What then
' need I fear? Shall I fear the Curse of the Law? My Saviour
' hath redeemed me from it, being made a Curse
' for*

‘ for me. Shall I fear Shame, or Pain, or Death itself?
 ‘ My Saviour hath suffered them all for me, so that
 ‘ none of them can now come near to hurt me. Shall
 ‘ I fear that Sin will still have Dominion over me?
 ‘ My Saviour hath overcome it, and his Grace shall be
 ‘ sufficient for me. Shall I fear the Powers of Hell?
 ‘ My Saviour hath triumphed over all, and will enable
 ‘ me to do so too. Shall I fear the Wrath of God?
 ‘ My Saviour hath appeased it with his own Blood,
 ‘ and so hath restored me to his Love and Favour:
 ‘ For he died for me. He himself hath now told me
 ‘ so; and therefore I believe it, and am now per-
 ‘ swaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor
 ‘ Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to
 ‘ come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature shall
 ‘ be able to separate me from the Love of GOD, which
 ‘ is in Christ Jesus my Lord, Rom viii. 38. 39.

Now seeing the Receiving of the Sacrament of his
 last Supper conduceth so very
 much both to the exercising and Hence receiving the
 strengthening our Faith in our Sacrament is both
 blessed Saviour, we who can never our Interest and our
 be saved without believing in him, Duty.
 cannot surely but acknowledge that

it is as much our Interest as it is our Duty, to receive
 it as often as we can. For my own Part, I do not
 see how it is possible for us to live either so confor-
 mably, or so piously, as becometh those who expect
 Salvation by Christ, without it. For first, we can-
 not but be all conscious to ourselves of the many Sins
 and Failures that we are continually subject to through
 the whole Course of our Lives. There is not a Day
 passeth over our Head without doing something we
 ought not to do, or else not doing something which we
 ought. Our Thoughts, our Affections, our Words, our
 Actions, are all one way or other faulty. The very
 best Works we do, have something that is not good
 in them. So that every Day we contract new Guilt,
 and have more Sins to answer for, than we had the
 Day before. But every Sin that we commit exposeth

us to the Wrath of Almighty G O D ; and makes us obnoxious to all the *Curses* which he hath threatned in his Word. The Thoughts whereof cannot but often cut us to the Heart, and make us cry out with *David*, *Mine Iniquities are gone over my Head, as an heavy Burden, they are too heavy for me to bear*, Psal. xxxviii. 4. But what then shall we do? Whither shall we go for Ease? Where can we find any Rest and Quiet for our troubled Minds? No where certainly so well as at our *Lord's Table*. It is only he that can give *Rest unto our Souls*, and it is there *he* doth it most effectually. For he there acquaints us that he himself hath *born the Punishments of our Sins*, and shews us how he did it, even by giving his *Body* to be *broken*, and his *Blood* to be *shed* for them. We there see that the Son of G O D died for the Sins of the World, and for ours among the rest. Yea, He there tells us he did so, by saying, *Take, eat, this is my Body which is given for you; and this is my Blood which is shed for you*, for you and for your Sins, as well as for any other. As if he should say to any particular Person by himself, Behold, and see what I have *done*, and what I have suffered for thee. It was for *thee* that I assumed an human *Body* and *Blood*. And this *Body* I gave to be *broken*, this *Blood* I gave to be *shed* for *thee*; and I now give it to *thee* for the Expiation of thy Sins. Therefore be of good chear, my Son, thy Sins are pardoned, *only be not faithless, but believing*.

He that thinks not this to be a great *Comfort*, must needs be very much hardned in his Sins, so as not to

feel the Burden of them. For he

*'Tis our Interest
as it comforts us
with Hopes of par-
don.*

that doth that, as all true Penitents be sure do, cannot but be highly pleased with any Assurance that can be given him, that his

Sins are pardoned: Much more with the greatest he can ever have on this side Heaven, even that which is given in the Holy Sacrament, where his Pardon is sealed with the Blood of Christ, and delivered to him by his Officers. And therefore
such

such a one cannot but be always longing for an Opportunity of *receiving* it, and embrace it with all his Heart wheresoever it comes; although it be *every Day* in the Week, as the *primitive Christians* had it; for this very Reason, even *because* of their daily Sins, as St. *Cyprian* informs us, *de Orat. Dom.* But in our Age the Case is alter'd: *Once a Week* is now thought too much. And I do not deny but that they who can live a *whole Week* together without Sin, may not have so much need of receiving it so often. But where shall we find such a Man? Not among us, be sure; we all know that we *sin* in Thought, Word, or Deed *every Day* in the Week, if not *every Hour* in the Day too. And therefore if we have any Care of our Souls, if any true Sorrow for our Sins, if any Desire to obtain the Pardon of them from the Hands of GOD, we must catch at all Opportunities we can get of *receiving* that *blessed Sacrament*, where it is offered to us by Christ himself, and that too upon the most easie Terms that can be imagined; nothing but *Repentance*, and *Faith* in him.

Neither is this all: For we are sensible not only of our manifold Sins; but likewise of the Cause or Occasion of them, even the Corruption of our Nature; which is so very much disorder'd and out of tune, that *we are not sufficient of our selves to think anything as of our selves*, much less to do any thing that is truly good, but when we would *do good*, *evil is present with us*, and spoils all we do: So that we may every one say with St. *Paul*, *I know that in me*, (that is, in my Flesh,) *dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not*, Rom. vii. 18. But how to perform that which is evil, we all find: We all find that very easie and natural to us. Our Thoughts are always running after it, our Hearts inclined to it; and do what we can by our own Strength, some Sin or other is apt to get *dominion over us*, and to *reign in our mortal Bodies*. Yea, tho' we delight (as the same Apostle speaks) *in the Law of GOD after the inward*

Man, yet we see another Law in our Members, warring against the Law of our Minds, and bringing us into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in our Members, ver. 22, 23. And if we be really concerned, as we ought to be, for the Glory of GOD, and for our own Good, this must needs be the greatest Trouble we can have in this World, and makes us cry out, every one in the Bitterness of his Soul, as he did, O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death, ver. 24. But then we may say also as he doth in the next Words, I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, ver. 25. He can deliver us, and will too, if we do but apply ourselves a-right unto him for it. But for that purpose there is nothing like to the frequent receiving his blessed Body and Blood. Our very Preparation for that Holy Sacrament, by recollecting our Sins, by considering what we have deserved, and what our Saviour suffered for them, and by examining our Repentance of them, whether it be sincere or no, doth of it self contribute very much to the taking off our Affections from them, and to the putting us upon constant Endeavour to forsake and avoid them. And so do the Impressions also which the solemn Administration of so Divine an Ordinance makes, and leaves upon our Minds afterwards, by setting before us the Death which the Son of GOD suffered for our Sins, and assuring us of Pardon if we repent of them. By which means they who frequently receive this Holy Sacrament, as suppose every Lord's day, are always kept upon their Guard, between the Preparations they make for it, and the Impressions that are made upon them by it. Which, if duly observed, must needs meet together, and so give them no time to indulge themselves in any Vice or Wickedness. For being to receive it upon the Lord's Day, they cannot surely but think of it, and prepare themselves for it two or three Days before; and when they have been there, they cannot but remember what they saw, and heard, and did there, at least three or four Days after; and so to the Time when they are to prepare themselves again for it.

Whereby

Whereby their Minds are piously dispos'd and employ'd all the *Week*, either about what they did the *Sunday* before, or what they are to do the *Sunday* following. Which must needs conduce very much to the arming them against all Temptations, to the preventing their falling into any gross Sin, and to the keeping them continually in an *holy* and *dévout* Temper.

But that which doth it most effectually of all, is the ghostly Strength they receive at the Sacrament itself. Where, *Affords us ghostly Strength for Perseverance in doing well.* as our Church rightly observes and asserts in her Catechism, ' Our Souls are strengthned and refresh-

' ed by the Body and Blood of ' Christ, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine'. Meat and Drink, we know, are by God's own Appointment the common Supports of human Life. Of all Meats, Bread is reckoned the most *strengthening*; of all Drinks, Wine is the most *refreshing*. Now, as our Bodies are *strengthened* and *refreshed* by these which are there used as the *outward* Part, or Sign of the Lord's Supper: So are our Souls by the thing signified by them, even by the Body and Blood of Christ, which, as I have *shewn*, are there *verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful*. It is a great Refreshment to our Souls, as we have seen already, to have the Pardon of our Sins sealed and delivered to us, as it is there, in the *Blood* of Christ. And our Souls are as much *strengthened* by the Grace of GOD, which always follows upon his Pardon and Reconciliation to us; and accompanieth the Body and Blood of Christ, wheresoever it is. And therefore all who duly receive it, do thereby receive it from him, *and Grace for Grace*, John i. 16. and so go from Strength to Strength, 'till they come to a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13.

Let us hear what he himself saith: *I am the Bread of Life*, saith he, *he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst*, John vi. 35. *I am the Living Bread which came down from*

from Heaven. If any Man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever : And the Bread that I will give, is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World, Ver. 51. Whoso eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood hath eternal Life... For my Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed : He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me, Ver. 54, 55, 56, 57. But then he adds afterwards, It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing. The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life, Ver. 63. As if he had said, all that I have now spoken, is to be understood in a spiritual Sense, and of a spiritual Life. I am the Life of your Souls: It is by my Body, and my Blood, that your Souls are quickened, nourished, strengthened and preserved to eternal Life.

For this we have Christ's own Word, and therefore may be confident, that as it is by him only that we can be regenerate, and born again to a new and spiritual Life : So it is by him only that this new and spiritual Life can be maintained and excited in us, so as to put forth, and manifest itself in our Actions. Without him we can do nothing, as he himself said, John xv. 5. But we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us, as his Apostle found by Experience, Phil. iv. 13. But he strengthens none but those who believe in him, and therefore only because they do so. For it is by our believing in him that we are made Members of his Body, and so receive Strength and Nourishment from him our Head. And according as our Faith is stronger or weaker; so is the Strength we receive from him more or less: And therefore the Holy Sacrament being the most sovereign Means for the confirming our Faith in him, our Souls must needs be very much strengthened and refreshed by it. For we there receive the proper Food of our Souls, the Bread of Life, and the Water of Life, the blessed Body and Blood of Christ himself. And if his
Blood

Blood, then his Spirit too, which is always with them; that Holy Spirit which purifies our Hearts, which sanctifies our Nature, which worketh in us both to will and to do, which strengthens and enables us to overcome the World, to withstand Temptations, to mortifie our Sins, to do our whole Duty both to God and Man, and so offer up *spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to GOD through Jesus Christ our Lord*, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

From hence therefore we may see the great Advantage, if not the Necessity of frequent Communion. We all know that our Bodies cannot subsist long, but very few Days without Food, And why should we think that our Souls should do so better than our Bodies? We all find by daily Experience, that our Souls are altogether as frail and infirm as our Bodies are; subject to as many Distempers, and every way as apt to decay, to grow faint and feeble, unable to walk at all in the narrow Path that leads to Life, without stumbling, or at least reeling to one side or other, unless they be always kept in good Plight, nourished and strengthened with such Food as is proper for them. And certainly we have as much reason at least, to take care of our immortal Souls, to preserve their Life, and Health, and Vigour, as we have to look after those Lumps of Clay which e'er long must crumble into Dust. But as for our Bodies, we feed them every Day, and that too, with the best that we can get for them. And shall we think once a Week too often to feed our Souls? And where shall we get such proper Food for them, as that which GOD himself hath provided, even the blessed Body and Blood of his dear Son? Which is so nourishing, so strengthening, so refreshing to our Souls, that the primitive Christians by the frequent use of it were able and ready every Moment, not only to do, but to suffer chearfully whatsoever could be laid upon them, even Death itself for the sake of Christ. But the Sacrament

crament is the same still as it was then. And if we could use it as constantly as they did, we might live as they lived, and die too, if GOD should be pleased to honour us so far as to call us to it, for his sake who died for us, and whose Death we there commemorate.

Wherefore as ever we desire to be strong in *Faith*, and *zealous* for the Honour of GOD: As we desire to *quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked*: As we desire to *crucifie the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts*: As we desire to live above this World, so as not to be ensnared or overpower'd by any thing that is in it: As we desire that the Power of Christ should always rest upon us, and enable us to walk *in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless*: In short, as we desire to live by his Assistance, both to live the Life, and to *die the Death of the Righteous*, we must *often eat this Bread, and drink this Cup*; and bless GOD for all Opportunities that we can get to do it.

These are some of the many *Arguments* and *Reasons* that might be produced for *frequent Communion*. What Effect they will have upon those that hear them, I know not; but fear that it will be much the same that Reason and Argument usually have upon the greatest part of Mankind: That is, very little, or none at all. But for mine own part, when I seriously consider these Things, I cannot but wonder with my self, how it comes to pass, that this *Holy Sacrament*, instituted by Christ himself, is so much neglected and disused as it is, in a place where his Religion is professed and acknowledged to be, as really it is, the *only true Religion* in the World. And after all my search, I can resolve it into nothing else but the Degeneracy of the Age we live in, and the great Decay of that most *Holy Religion* among us. I am sure, *from the beginning it was not so*. For
some

some Ages after the Establishment of the *Christian Religion* by Christ our Saviour, so long as they who embraced it gave themselves up to the conduct of that *Holy Spirit* which he sent down among them, and were inspired by it with true Zeal for GOD, and inflamed with Love to their ever blessed Redeemer, so as to observe all things that he had commanded, whatsoever it cost them; then they ne'er met together upon any Day in the Week, much less upon the *Lord's day*, for the publick Worship of GOD, but they all received this *Holy Sacrament*, as the principal Business they met about, and the most proper Christian Service they could perform. And it is very observable, that so long as this continued, Men were endued with extraordinary Gifts, as well as the Graces of GOD's Holy Spirit, so as to be able to do many wonderful things by it: Yea, and suffer too whatsoever could be inflicted on them for Christ's sake. But in process of time Men began to leave off their first Love to him, and turn his Religion into *Dispute* and *Controversie*; and then as their Piety and Devotion grew cooler and cooler, the *Holy Sacrament* began to be neglected more and more; and the *Priests* who administered it, had fewer and fewer to receive it, until at length they had sometimes none at all.

The Influence of the Holy Sacrament in better times.

'Tis Disputes enervated Piety.

But still they mistook themselves to be obliged in *Duty* and *Conscience* to consecrate and receive it themselves, although they had none to receive with them. And this Mistake, I suppose, gave the first occasion to that Multitude of *private Masses* which have been so much abused in the Church of *Rome*; where the Priest commonly receives himself, although he hath never a one to communicate with him: And so there can be no *Communion* at all. And as that *Abuse*, so the *Disuse* of the *Holy Sacrament*, sprang first from Mens *Coldness* and *Indifferency* in Religion, which hath prevailed so far in our Days, that there are many thousands

*And Indifferency
in Religion succeeded.*

thousands of Persons who are baptized, and live many Years in the Profession of the Christian Religion, and yet never received the *Sacrament* of Christ's Body and Blood in all their Lives. And but very few that receive it above once or twice a Year, which is a great Reproach and Shame to the Age we live in ; but none at all to the *Church*: For she is always ready to administer it, if *People* could be perswaded to come to it. But that they cannot, or rather will not be; they have still one *Pretence* or other to excuse themselves, but none that will excuse them before God and their own Consciences another Day.

And many Pretences at length alleged against receiving though vain and trifling ones.

What their *Pretences* are, I shall not undertake to determine. They are so many that they cannot easily be numbred. And many of them so *vain* and *trifling*, that they are not worth rehearsing. But the bottom of them all is this; Men renounced the World, the Devil and the Flesh in their Baptism, but they are loth to do it in their Lives: They then promised to serve God, but now they find something else to do. They have all one *Sin* or other that reigns over them, and captivates their Hearts and Affections, so that they cannot endure the Thoughts of parting with it. And they think, as they ought to do, that if they come to the Holy Sacrament, they must *first examine themselves*, repent of all their Sins, turn to God, renew their baptismal Vow, and resolve to lead a new Life. But this they are resolved not to do. And if they should come to the *Sacrament*, it would but disturb their Quiet, make them uneasy in their Minds, and hinder them from enjoying the Pleasure they were wont to take in their Sins. And for their part, they had rather displease God than themselves: and neglect their Duty rather than leave their Sins.

Nothing really obstructs, but love to Sin.

Sins. And so add Sin to Sin, and *treasure up to themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* This is plainly the Case of most of those who live in the Neglect of this Holy Commandment. And what can be said to such Men? So long as such, they are not fit to come to the *Communion.* And therefore all that can be said to them, is only to beg of them to consider their Condition before it be too late, and repent as soon as they can: Lest they die, as they have lived, in Sin, and be punished with *everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.*

But there are others who do receive the *Sacrament* of Christ's Body and Blood sometimes, as perhaps, *two or three times in a Year:* And my Charity prompts me to believe, that they would do it oft'ner, if they thought it to be their *Duty.* But there are some things which at first Sight may seem, at least to them, to plead their Excuse; and therefore deserve to be duly considered by us. As *First,* They say, our *Church* requires them only to receive *three times a Year:* And they do not question but she would oblige them to receive it oft'ner, if it was necessary. This is a *mistake* that a great many have fallen into, and by that means have been kept from the Sacrament more than otherwise they would have been. I call it a *mistake:* For it is so, and a very great one. For as in all things else, so particularly in this, our *Church* keeps close to the Pattern of the *Apostolick and Primitive Church:* When, as I have before observed, the *Lord's Supper* was administred and received commonly *every Day* in the *Week,* but most constantly on the *Lord's day.* And our *Church* supposeth it to be so still, and therefore hath accordingly made Provision for it. Which, that I may demonstrate to you, it will be necessary

'Tis our Duty to
receive oft'ner than
three times a Year.

The Sense of our Church about frequent Communion heretofore.

to enquire into the Sense and Practice of our Church in this Point, all along from the Beginning of the Reformation; or, to speak more properly, from the time when she was restored to that *Apostolical Form* which she is now of, as she was at first: Which we date from the Reign of King Edward VI.

For in the first Year of that pious Prince, the *Liturgy*, or Book of *Common Prayer*, was first compiled; and in the second it was settled by *Act of Parliament*. In which Book it is ordered, that the *Exhortation* to those who are minded to receive the Sacrament, shall be read: Which is there set down, much the same that we read now.

It should be daily administred in Cathedrals.

But afterwards it is said, In *Cathedral Churches, or other Places where there is daily Communion, it shall be sufficient to read this Exhortation above written once in a month.* And in *Parish Churches*

it may be left unsaid, Fol. 123. Where we may observe, First, that in those Days there was *daily Communion* in the Cathedral Churches, and other Places, as there used to be in the *Primitive Church*. And accordingly I find, in the Records of St. Paul's, that when the Plate, Jewels, &c. belonging to the said Cathedral, were delivered to the King's Commissioners, they, upon the Dean and Chapters Request, permitted to remain, among other things, *Two Pair of Basons for to bring the Communion Bread, and to receive the Offerings for the Poor; Whereof one pair Silver, for every Day, the other for Festivals, &c. gilt.* Dugdal. Hist. of St. Paul's, Page 274. From whence it is plain, that the *Communion* was then celebrated in that Church every Day. And so it was even

And even Parish Churches

in *Parish Churches*. For other wise it needed not to be ordered, as it is in the *Rubrick* above-mentioned, that in *Parish-Churches* upon the Week Days the said *Exhortation* may be left unsaid. And to the same purpose

purpose it is afterwards said, *When the Holy Communion is celebrated on the Work-day, or in private Houses, then may be omitted the Gloria in Excelsis, the Creed, the Homily, and the Exhortation.* Fol. 132.

Next after that we quoted first, this Rubrick immediately follows; *And if upon the Sunday or Holy-day, the People be negligent to come to the Communion, then shall the Priest earnestly exhort his Parishioners to dispose themselves to the receiving of the Holy Communion more diligently, saying, &c.* Which shews that upon all Sundays and Holy days People then generally received: The Church expected

and required it of them. And if any Minister found that his Parishioners did not always come, at least upon those Days, he was to exhort and admonish them to dispose themselves more diligently for it: And that by the Command of the Church it self; whereby she hath sufficiently declared her Will and Desire, that all her Members should receive the Communion as they did in the *Primitive Times*, every Day in the Week if possible: And if that could not be, yet at least every Sunday and Holy Day in the Year.

In the Rubrick after the *Communion Service*, there are several things to the same purpose: For it is there ordered, that upon *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, although there be none to communicate, the Priest shall say all things at the Altar appointed to be said at the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, until after the Offertory. And then it follows: *And the same order shall be used whensoever the People be customably assembled to pray in the Church, and none disposed to communicate with the Priest,* Fol. 130. Whereby we are given to understand, that upon what Day soever People came to Church, the Priest was to be ready to celebrate the *Holy Sacrament* if any were disposed to communicate with him. And if there were none, he was to shew his readiness, by reading a considerable part of the *Communion-Service*.

There is another Rubrick in the same place, that makes it still plainer. Which I shall transcribe, be-

cause the Book is not commonly to be had ; neither can it be expressed better than in its Words, which are these, ‘ Also, that the *receiving* of the Sacrament ‘ of the blessed Body and Blood of Christ, may be most ‘ agreeable to the *Institution* thereof, and to the Usage ‘ of the *Primitive Church*, in all *Cathedral* and *Collegiate* Churches, there shall always *some* communicate ‘ with the *Priest* that ministreth. And that the same ‘ may be also observed every where abroad in the ‘ *Country*, some *one* at the least of that House in every ‘ *Parish*, to whom by course, after the Ordinance herein made, it appertaineth to offer for the Charges of ‘ the *Communion* ; or some other whom they shall provide to offer for them, shall receive the *Holy Communion* with the *Priest* : The which may be the ‘ better done, for that they know before when their ‘ *course* cometh, and may therefore dispose themselves ‘ to the *worthy receiving* of the Sacrament. And with ‘ him or them, who doth so offer the *Charges* of the ‘ *Communion*, all other who be then godly dispos’d ‘ thereunto, shall likewise receive the *Communion*. And ‘ by this means the *Minister* having always some to ‘ communicate with him, may accordingly solemnize ‘ so *high* and *holy Mysteries*, with all the *Suffrages* and ‘ due Order appointed for the same. And the *Priest* on the ‘ *Week-day* shall forbear to celebrate the *Communion*, except he have some that will *communicate* with him.’

Here we see what Care the Church took that the Sacrament might be duly administred not only in *Cathedral* but likewise in *Parish-Churches*. For which purpose, whereas every *Parishioner* had before been used to find the *Holy Loaf*, as it was called, in his *course* ; in the *Rubrick* before this, it is ordained that every *Pastor* or *Curate* shall find *sufficient Bread* and *Wine* for the *Communion* ; and that the *Parishioners* every one in his *course*, shall offer the *Charges* of it at the *Offer-tory* to the *Pastor* or *Curate* ; and in this it is ordain’d that every such *Parishioner* shall then in his *course* *communicate*, or else get some other Person to do it, that so the *Communion* may be duly celebrated : And all there
present

present that were godly dispos'd might partake of it. Which one would have thought as good a Provision as could have been made in the case. But notwithstanding, through the Obstinacy and Carelesness of some, in not making their said Offering as they were commanded, it sometimes failed ; as appears from the Letter written about a Year after by the *Privy Council*, and subscribed by the Archbishop of *Canterbury* and others, to the *Bishops*, to assure them that the King intended to go on with the *Reformation*, wherein among other Things they say: ' And farther, whereas it is ' come to our Knowledge that divers froward and ob- ' stinate Persons do refuse to pay towards the finding ' of Bread and Wine for the Holy Communion, accord- ' ing to the Order prescribed in the said Book, by reason ' whereof the Holy Communion is many times omit- ' ted upon the Sunday. These are to will and com- ' mand you to convent such obstinate Persons before ' you, and them to admonish and command to keep ' the Order prescribed in the said Book. And if any ' such shall refuse so to do, to punish them by *Suspen- ' sion, Excommunication, or other Censures of the Church*, Hist. of the Reform. Part 2. Coll. p. 192. From whence we may also learn how much they were troubled to hear that the Holy Sacrament was any were omitted even upon the Sunday, upon any Sunday; how great a Fault and Scandal they judged it to be, and what Care they took to prevent it for the future !

This was the State of this Affair at the Beginning of the *Reformation*, and it continues in Effect the same to this Day. About three or four Years after the fore said Book of *Common Prayer* first came out, it was revis'd, and set forth again with some Alterations in the *Form*, but

The same Obligation now to daily Communion, as at the beginning of the Reformation.

none that were material in the *Substance* of it. Only the former way of the *Parishioners* finding Bread and Wine for the Communion of every one in his course, being now found not so effectual as was expected ;

that was now laid aside, and it was ordered to be provided at the Charges of the Parish in general, in these Words, *The Bread and Wine for the Communion shall be provided by the Curate and the Church-wardens, at the Charges of the Parish: And the Parish shall be discharg'd of such Sums of Money or other Duties, which hitherto they have paid for the same, by order of their Houses, every Sunday.* Where we may take notice, that as hitherto it has been provided every *Sunday* by the Houses of every Parish, as they lay in Order, it was now to be provided by the *Minister and Church-warden*, at the Charges of the *whole Parish*, but still every *Sunday*, as it was before; which being the most certain Way that could be found out for it, it is still continued. The first part of this *Rubrick*, whereby it is enjoined, being still in force. But the latter part from these words, *And the Parish shall be discharged, &c.* is now left out, as it was necessary it should be, after the former *course* had been disus'd for above an hundred Years.

Now this Book of *Common-prayer*, which was thus settled by Act of Parliirment, in the *fifth* and *sixth* Year of *Edward the VIth*, was that which was afterwards confirmed in the Beginning of *Queen Elizabeth's* Reign, with one Alteration or Addition of certain Lessons to be used on every *Sunday* in the year, and the form of the *Litany* alter'd, and corrected, with two Sentences only added in the Delivery of the *Sacrament* to the *Communicants*. These were all the Alterations that were then made, or indeed that have been ever made since that time to this, except it be in Words or Phrases, in the Addition of some Prayers, and in some such inconsiderable things, as do not at all concern our present Purpose. For the Care of our *Church*, to have the *Holy Communion* constantly celebrated, hath been the same all along, from the time that the Book of *Common-Prayer* before spoken of, was first settled. As may be easily proved from that which was established by the last Act of Uniformity. Which therefore I shall now briefly consider, so far as it relates to the Business in hand: That we may understand the Sense of our *Church* at present concerning it. For

For this purpose, therefore, we may first observe that the *Communion Service* is appointed for the *Communion* itself, and therefore call'd the *Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion*. Now our *Church* supposing, or at least hoping that some of her Members will receive this *Holy Communion* every Day, hath taken care that this Service may be used every Day in the Week, as appears from the *Rubrick* immediately before the proper Lessons, which is this: *Note also, that the Collect, Epistle and Gospel appointed for the Sunday, shall serve all the Week after, where it is not in this Book otherwise order'd.* But the *Collect, Epistle and Gospel* are part of the *Communion-Service*, for which there is no occasion on the Week-Days; neither can it be used except the *Communion* be administred, which therefore is here supposed to be done every Day in the Week. And so it is also in the Celebration of the *Communion* it self, where there are proper Prefaces appointed to be used upon certain Days. Upon *Christmas-day*, and seven Days after. Upon *Easter-day* and seven Days after. Upon *Ascension-day* and seven Days after. Upon *Whit-sunday* and six Days after (the next Day being *Trinity-sunday*, which hath one peculiar to it self.) Now to what purpose are these *Prefaces* appointed to be used seven Days together, or six, none of which can be a *Sunday*, if the *Sacrament* ought not to be administred upon all those Days, and so upon *Week-Days* as well as *Sundays*? They are all, as I intimated before, to be used in the actual *Administration* of it, and therefore plainly suppose it to be actually administred upon each of those Days, which being for the most Part neither *Sundays* nor *Holy-days*, they most evidently demonstrate, that according to the *Mind* and *Order* of our *Church*, as well as the *Primitive*, the *Lord's Supper* ought to be administred every Day, that all who live as they ought, in her Communion may be daily Partakers of it.

In the *Rules* and *Orders*, (which we call the *Rubrick*) after the *Communion-Service*, there are several things that deserve to be consider'd in this Case. It

is there order'd, that there shall be no Celebration of the *Communion*, except there be a convenient Number ; that is, *four*, or *three*, at the least, to communicate with the *Priest*. According to which *Rule*, although the *Priest* have all things ready, and desires to consecrate and receive the *Holy Sacrament* himself, yet he must not do it, unless he have such a Number to communicate with him, that it may be properly a *Communion*. But, as it is there order'd, *Upon the Sundays and other Holy-days (if there be no Communion) shall be said all that is appointed at the Communion until the End of the general Prayer (For the good Estate of the Catholick Church of Christ.)* where we may observe, that the Church, as I have shewn, appoints the Sacrament to be administred *every Day*. But if it so fall out, that there be not in any Place a convenient Number to communicate with the *Priest*, and by consequence according to the Order before mention'd, *no Communion*; yet nevertheless upon *Sundays* and other *Holy-days* so much of the *Communion-Service* shall be said as is there limited. Why only upon *Sundays* and *Holy-days*, but to distinguish them from other Days, on which if there be a sufficient Number of *Communicants*, the whole *Communion-Service* is to be used; but no part of it, except there be so; but upon *Sundays* and *Holy-days*, although there be not such a Number, and therefore no *Communion*; yet however, the *Priest* shall go up to the *Altar*, and there read all that is appointed to be said at the *Communion*, until the End of the Prayer for Christ's *Catholick-Church*; whereby the People may see, that neither *he* nor the *Church* is to be blam'd, if the *Holy Sacrament* be not then administred, For as much as he is there ready by the Order of the *Church* to do it, and goes as far as he can in the Service appointed for it, without the actual Administration of it: And therefore that the Fault is wholly in themselves that it is not *actually* administred, because they will not make up a convenient Number among them to communicate with him. Which is a most excellent Order: For the People hereby have not only *GOD's Holy Com-*
mandments

mandments solemnly proclaim'd, the *Epistle* and *Gospel* for the Day, the *Nicene Creed*, and *Prayers* proper for that Oc-
 casion read to them; but they are likewise put in mind of their Duty to their Saviour in receiving his most blessed *Body* and *Blood*, and upbraided with their Neglect of

Reading the Ante-Communion Service upbraids the People with their Neglect of the Sacrament.

it. For which purposes also I think it very expedient, that the *Order* of the *Church*, or the reading that part of the Service at the *Communion-Table*, even when there is no Communion, be duly observed.

The next *Rubrick*, in the same Place, that concerns our present Business, is this, *And in all Cathedral and Collegiate-Churches and Colleges, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall all receive the Communion with the Priest every Sunday at the least, except they have a reasonable Cause to the contrary.* Where we see that the *Church* doth not command, but supposes that the *Sacrament* is constantly administred in all such Places: taking it for granted, that it is never omitted there, where there are so many Persons devoted to the Service of *GOD*; but that there is always a sufficient Number to *communicate*. But she absolutely commands, that all *Priests* and *Deacons* that belong to such Foundations, shall receive the *Communion* with the *Priest* every *Sunday* at the least, except any of them have a reasonable cause to the contrary (which the Ordinary of the Place, I suppose, is to be Judge of:) They are bound therefore, all and every one of them, to receive it every *Sunday*, which notwithstanding they cannot do, unless it be administred every *Sunday* among them. Wherefore if there be any such Places where it is not so administred, or any such Persons who do not, without just Cause to the contrary, receive it every *Sunday* in the Year, I do not see how they can answer it to *GOD*, to the *Church*, or to their own *Consciences*. Neither are they bound to receive it only every *Sunday*, but every *Sunday* at the least. Which plainly supposeth that it is administred upon

upon *other* Days as well as *Sundays*. For otherwise they could not receive it *oft'ner*, if they would. And it is to be hoped, that all such Persons *receive* it as often as it is administred among them. But the *Church* expressly requires them to *receive* it at least every *Sunday*, so as never to omit it at least upon that Day, except they have a reasonable, or such a Cause to the contrary as will justify their Omission of it before the *Church*, and *Christ* himself at the last Day. These things being thus briefly explain'd, we shall easily see into the meaning of the Words that gave us the Occasion to discourse of them, which are these, in the Place last quoted: *And note, that every Parishioner shall commu-*

Every Parishioner bound to receive three times in the Year at least, under Pain of Excommunication.

nicate at the least three times in the

Year, of which Easter to be one. From

whence some have been tempted

to think, that the *Church* doth

not look upon it as necessary that

they should communicate above

thrice a Year. I say, tempted to

think so. For no Man surely in

his right Wits can of himself draw such an Inference from these Words, which is so directly contrary to the Sense of the *Church*, and hath no Foundation at all in the Words themselves. For the *Church*, as I have shewn, hath taken all the care she can, that the *Holy Sacrament* should be every where administred, if it was possible, every Day, at least every *Sunday* and *Holy-day* in the Year; which she would never have done, if she had thought it sufficient for any one to receive only *thrice* a Year. For then all her Care about the *frequent* Administration of it, would be in vain, and to no purpose. And besides, she hath drawn up an excellent Exhortation to be read by the *Minister* of every Parish, in case he sees the People negligent to come to the Holy Communion, beginning thus: *Dearly Beloved, on——I intend by G O D's Grace, to celebrate the Lord's Supper.* Where we may observe, that it is not said, on such a *Sunday*, but on——with a Blank, to shew that the *Minister* may appoint the Communion

nion on any Day of the Week, when he can have a sufficient Number to communicate with him ; and so it is in the other Exhortation ; only there is *Day* put in, which may be understood of *Tuesday* or *Wednesday*, or any other Day as well as *Sunday*, for the same reason. In that first mention'd, the *Minister* in the Words, and by the Order of the *Church*, invites all there present, and beseecheth them for the Lord *Jesus Christ's* sake, to come to the *Lord's Supper*. And among other things, he saith to them all, *I bid you in the Name of GOD, I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you as you love your own Salvation, that ye will be Partakers of this Holy Communion.* There are several such pathetical Expressions in that *Exhortation*, wherewith the *Church* most earnestly exhorts, adviseth, admonisheth all Persons to come to this *Holy Sacrament*. And this Exhortation every *Minister* is to read publickly before all his Congregation, whensoever he sees them negligent to come to it : As all are, who come but *two* or *three* times a Year, where they may have it oft'ner if they will. They plainly live in the *neglect* of it, and therefore ought to have this Exhortation read to them, according to the Order of the *Church*. Whereby she hath sufficiently demonstrated, that she doth not think it enough for People generally to receive it only *three* times in a year ; but that it is her Opinion, that they ought, and her hearty Desire they would receive it as often as it is, or, according to her Order, ought to be administred among them.

But then she wisely considers withal, that being a *national Church*, made up of all sorts of Persons, it is necessary that her general *Rules* and *Orders* should be accommodated, as much as possible, to the several Conditions and Circumstances that many of them may be sometimes in. And therefore, although she exhorts all her Members to *frequent* and *constant* Communion, yet she doth not think fit to command, and oblige them all, under the Pain of *Excommunication*, to receive oft'ner than *three* times a Year, lest some might be thereby tempted to come sometimes without that
Preparation

Preparation and Disposition of Mind that is requisite to the worthy partaking of so great a *Mystery*. I say, under Pain of *Excommunication*: For that is the Meaning and the Effect of this Law, that they who do not communicate at least *three* times in a Year, may, and ought to be cast out of the Communion of *Christ's Church*, as no longer fit to be called Christians, seeing they live in such a gross Neglect of *Christ's* own Command, and of that Duty whereby Christians are in an especial Manner distinguish'd from other Men. Other Men, as *Jews, Turks, and Heathens*, may *fast*, and *pray*, and hear *Sermons*, in their Way: But to receive the Sacrament of *Christ's Supper*, is proper and peculiar only to *Christians*, or such as profess that Religion which *Jesus Christ* hath settled in the World.

The receiving this Sacrament so often as the Church requires, the best characteristic of a Disciple of Christ.

And therefore they, who receive the Sacrament, do thereby manifest themselves to be Christians. They who do it not, make it at least doubtful whether they be Christians or no; for although they were baptized, and so made Christians once, who knows whether they have not renounc'd their Baptism, and apostatiz'd from the *Christian Religion*? They themselves perhaps may profess they have not; but the *Church* can never know it, but hath just cause to suspect the contrary, so long as they refuse to renew the Vow they made in the Sacrament of *Baptism*, by receiving that of the *Lord's Supper*. And the least that can be requir'd of them for that purpose, is to do it *three* times a year, which therefore the *Church* absolutely requires: Not that it is not necessary for them to receive it *often*, in order to their Salvation; but because it is necessary they should do it at least

And a true Member of the Church.

so often, that the Church may be satisfied that they continue in their Communion, and constant to that Religion wherein alone Salvation may be had.

• And

And hence it is, that in the Rule it self, it is not said that *every Person*, but *every Parishioner*, shall communicate at the least *Three* times in the Year; which therefore is requir'd of all, not as they are Members only of the *Catholick*, but as they are Members of a *Parochial Church*; and they are bound by this Law to do it at least so often in their own *Parish Church*, where they are *Parishioners*: Otherwise they do not do it as *Parishioners*, as the Law requires. So that although a Man communicates an Hundred times in any other Place; as in the *Cathedral*, which is free to all of the Diocess, or in a Chapel of Ease, or in any other *Church*, when he can have it at his own, this doth not satisfy the Law. But he must communicate at least *Three* times in the Year, as a Parishioner, in his own *Parish Church*, where there are Officers call'd *Church-Wardens*, appointed on purpose to take notice of it, and to inform the *Church* against him, if he neglect to do it so often as she requires. That she may use the most effectual Means to bring him to Repentance for his Sin, and to make him more careful for the future to perform so great and necessary a Duty as this is; or if he continue obstinate, cut him off from the Body of Christ, as no longer worthy to be call'd a Member of it. And therefore all that can be reasonably inferred from this Law, is, that the *Church* doth not think them fit to communicate at all, who will not communicate at least *Three* times in the Year. But as for her Opinion of the *Necessity* of communicating oft'ner, in order to Mens obtaining Eternal Salvation by the Blood of Christ, that she hath sufficiently declar'd, by the great Care she hath taken, to have this *Holy Sacrament* administred constantly, as often as it was in the *Apostle's* and *Primitive Time* of Christianity; that is, as often as any Christian can desire to have it. For according to the Order and Discipline of our

L

Church,

The want of a sufficient Number of Communicants, the only Reason to justify the Omission of frequent Communion, i. e. daily, or weekly at least.

Church, if a sufficient Number of *Parishioners*, against whom there is no just Exception, desire to receive it every *Sunday*, or every *Day* in the Year, the Minister of their *Parish* not only may, but, as I humbly conceive, is bound to *consecrate* and *administer* it to them. The want of such a Number being, as far as I can perceive, the only Reason that can ever justify the Omission of it.

I have endeavour'd to set this Matter in as clear a Light as I could, because it will

An Eulogy of the Church of England, in behalf of this Doctrine.

discover to us several things very observable concerning the *Church* we live in. For hereby we see how exactly she follows the Pattern of the *Primitive* and *Apostolic*

lick Church in this particular, as well as others: What great Care she hath taken, that the Bread and Water of Life may be duly distributed to all her Members whenever they *hunger and thirst* after it. With how great Prudence she hath so order'd it, that all may have it *as often* as they will, and yet none compell'd to receive it oft'n'r than it is absolutely *necessary*, in order to their manifesting themselves to continue in the Faith of *Christ*. How desirous she is that all would receive it *constantly*, and yet how careful that none may receive it *unworthily*. How *uniform* she hath been in her Orders about it all along; and by consequence what cause we all have to bless God, that we live in the *Communion* of such a *Church*; and how much it behoves us to receive the Holy Communion of her; not only *as often* as she strictly commands all to receive it under the Pain of Excommunication, but as often as she adviseth and exhorteth us to do it in order to our Eternal Salvation, and as she is ready and desirous to communicate it to us. And then we should be sure to receive it *as often* as we are bound, either in Duty to God, or by our own Interest to do it.

Another Reason why many do not oft'n'r eat this Bread and drink this Cup, is because, as they pretend, they dare not for fear of sinning against

II. Unworthiness.

God

God, and incurring eternal Damnation by it. For the Apostle in this very Place saith, *Whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, v. 27. And he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body, v. 29.* But they cannot but acknowledge themselves to be *unworthy* of it, and if they should do it often, they might sometimes do it *unworthily*, and so might hazard their Salvation by it. This is a Mistake that many have lain under; and therefore it will be worth our while to lay it as open as we can, that People may see into the *Vanity* and *Falshood* of it.

First therefore, if there be any Force in this Argument against frequent Communion, it holds as well against ever communicating at all. For if every *unworthy* Person that presumes to eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, and every one that doth it any way

Examination of
this II^d Objection
against frequent
Communion.

unworthily, is thereby render'd obnoxious to eternal Damnation, then all would be so that ever eat and drink it at all; forasmuch as no Man is worthy of any, much less of so great a Mercy as that is; neither can any Man do any, much less so great a Work as that is, every way so exactly as he ought. And therefore no Man, according to this Opinion, can ever obey this Command of his Saviour, without running the Hazard of losing his Salvation by it: Which is such a groundless and vain Conceit, that I wonder how it first came into any Man's Head. For it is the same as to imagine that he who came into the World on purpose to save us, should require us to do that in order to our Salvation, which we can never do without being damned. Which is so absurd, that whatsoever is, this be sure cannot be the *Apostle's* Meaning in those Words.

Neither indeed can the Words themselves bear any such Sense, without plain Force and Violence put

upon them. For the *Apostle* doth
Raised from the not here speak of the *Unworthi-*
Context. *ness* of the Person, but of the
 Action. He doth not say, If any
unworthy Person shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup:
 For all are *unworthy*, and they usually the most, who
 think themselves the least, and they least, who think
 themselves the most *unworthy*. But he saith, *He that*
eateth or drinketh unworthily, or after an *unworthy* man-
 ner, unbecoming so great and sacred a Duty as that
 is. And what this *unworthy* Manner of receiving the
 Holy Sacrament was, which he here speaks of, appears
 plainly from the *Context*. He is
On the Corinthians here reproving the *Corinthians* for
unworthy receiving. some Disorders that were among
 them, and particularly in the Ce-
 lebration of the *Lord's Supper*. For first of all, saith
 he, *when ye come together in the Church, I hear that*
there be Divisions among you, and I partly believe it, v. 18.
 It seems there were *Divisions* among them, not only in
 other Places, but in the *Church* it self; not at other
 times only, but likewise when they were receiving the
Holy Communion it self: And then he adds, *When ye*
come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat
the Lord's Supper: For in eating every one taketh before
other his own Supper, and one is hungry, and another is
drunken. What, have ye not Houses to eat and drink in?
Or despise ye the Church of GOD, and shame them that
have not, or are poor? v. 20, 21, 22. Where we may
 observe, that they *came together*, as I have observed be-
 fore, to eat the *Lord's Supper*, that was the end, as they
 pretended, of their Meeting; but as they ordered the
 Business, they did not do it: they did not *eat the Lord's*
Supper, but their own. Some eat but little, so as to be
 still *hungry*; others eat and drank so much as to be
drunken, and that in the *Church* it self. For that they
 eat their own *Supper* there, appears from the *Apostle's*
 calling it their *own*, and not the *Lord's Supper*; and
 also from his saying in the next Verse, *What, have ye*
not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the Church of
 GOD,

GOD, making as if that was but like one of your own Houses where ye eat and drink every Day? And lastly, from the Direction he afterwards gives them how to amend this Fault, saying, *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another: And if any Man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation, or Judgment, v. 33, 34.* This therefore is the thing which the *Apostle* here condemns. They had got, it seems, a wicked Custom among them to bring their own ordinary Food to the Church, and to eat and drink it there. And because they did it in the Church, they looked upon it as the *Lord's Supper*; or at least, eat that there no otherwise than they used to eat their own at home; without shewing any respect to Christ's Mystical Body and Blood, or making any difference between his Supper and their own; but only that they eat the one in the Church, and the other at their own Houses. Which was a great Mistake and Fault: For which the *Apostle* meekly reproves them, saying, *What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not, v. 22.* And then he gives them the reason why he could not praise, but blame them for it; even because the *Lord's Supper* was instituted by the Lord Christ himself, to keep up the Remembrance of himself in the Church, to their Ignorance of which he in great Charity imputes their Fault. Not doubting but that if they had known the Nature and End of that Holy Sacrament, they would have set a greater Value upon it; and therefore perceiving that they did not rightly understand what he had before delivered to them about it, he fully declares it again to them, saying, *For I have received of the Lord, &c. v. 23, 24, 25.* After which, having acquainted them in my Text, how this is done in Remembrance of Christ, even by shewing forth his Death, he draws this Inference from it; wherefore *whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, v. 27.* Which therefore must needs be understood of that unworthy manner of doing it, which he before spoke of, and which gave him the occasion of saying it,

even their *eating this Bread, and drinking this Cup of the Lord*, after the same manner as they eat and drank at home, without expressing any Reverence to the *Holy Sacrament*, or to *Christ's Body and Blood* there represented. And therefore he saith, That *whosoever doth so, is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*; that is, he is guilty of profaning of *Christ's Mystical Body and Blood*, crucifying, as it were, to himself *the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame*, Heb. 6. 6. by *eating his Body, and drinking his Blood as common things*, and so exposing him to Contempt and Scorn.

That this is the true Meaning of the Phrase, appears also from the next Verse but one,

Where the Word Damnation signifies temporal Judgments, not Eternal Damnation.

where it occurs again: *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body*, v. 29. Not discerning, that is, not considering whose Body it

is; nor making any difference between that and their ordinary Food. As the original Word *Διακρίνω* plainly imports. This therefore is that *unworthy* receiving which the *Apostle* here particularly condemneth; when Men come to the *Lord's Table*, and receive the outward Signs of *Bread and Wine*, without discerning by Faith the *Lord's Body* signified by them; and therefore without shewing any more Regard and Reverence to what they eat and drink there, than they do to any other Meat and Drink. Which horrid Sin, although the *Corinthians* fell into it before they fully understood the *Nature and End of Christ's Institution*; yet I hope few are guilty of it among us, now that the *Institution of this Holy Sacrament* is so clearly delivered and explained by the *Apostle* in this Place. They seem to come nearest to it, who sit at the *Lord's Table* as they do at their own; and receive *Christ's Body and Blood* with no more Reverence and godly Fear, than they eat and drink at home.

But that which hath frightened People most from this *Sacrament*, is the *Apostle's* saying, according to our
Tran-

Translation, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself.* And I confess, at first sight it looks very frightfully. For it seems to imply, that whosoever receiveth the Holy Sacrament after any *unworthy* manner, or any otherwise than he ought, is, *ipso facto*, damned, or adjudged to *Eternal Punishments* for it. Which, if true, would discourage all considering Persons from ever receiving at all, unless they have greater assurance of their own *Worthiness* and Abilities, than can reasonably be expected in this Life, or justly pretended to by any that know themselves. But our Comfort is, this cannot possibly be the meaning of the Words. For, besides, that no Man can receive it so *worthily* as he ought, and every *unworthy* receiving, as I have shewn, is not that which the *Apostle* here speaks of: Besides that, I say, the Word *Κρίμα*, which is translated *Damnation* in the *Text*, in the *Margin* of our Bibles is rendred *Judgment*. Which shews that our Translators themselves were not satisfied that the Word here signified *Damnation*, but that it might be taken in the other Sense. But howsoever they put *Damnation* into the *Text*, to make People, I suppose, the more careful how they received; not foreseeing that ill Uses might be made of it: And accordingly have been so in our Age. Wherein through the *Ignorance* or *Indiscretion* of some Persons, this one Word hath kept more People from the *Holy Communion*, than all the Commandments for it, can bring to it. Not in it self, or from its own proper Meaning; but by reason of the harsh Sound it makes in our Ears, who commonly use it for *Damnation* to *Eternal Punishments*; whereas it may be applied as well to those which are only *Temporal*. And it must be here. The original Word *Κρίμα* signifies *Judgment* in general: Whereby a Man is adjudged to any sort of Punishment. But what that is, in particular, must be determined from the Circumstances of the Place where it is used. As in this Place, the *Apostle* himself plainly shews what kind of *Judgment* or *Damnation* he means by it. For having said, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eaterh end*
drinketh

drinketh Damnation, or Judgment, to himself; he immediately adds, For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep, v. 30. From whence it is easie to suppose, that some *Epidemical* Distemper at that time raged at *Corinth*, particularly among the Christians, of which many died; and others, tho' they escaped Death, yet continued *weak and sickly* for some time after. This the *Apostle* ascribes to the *Judgment* of God upon them, for their *unworthy* and profane *eating* and *drinking* Christ's Mystical Body and Blood, as if it had been common Food. *For this cause* saith he, *many are weak and sickly among you, &c.* And therefore this must needs be the *Judgment* which he here means. But this is so far from *eternal* Damnation, that it is usually inflicted on purpose to prevent that. And that it was so at this Time, appears from what follows: *For, saith he, if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World, ver. 31, 32.* This was the End of that, as it is of all the *Judgments* which GOD lays upon his People, even to bring them thereby to such a Sight and Sense of their Sins, and to such a hearty and sincere Repentance, that they may not be *condemned* for them. And therefore when the *Apostle* saith, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself:* And again afterwards, *If any Man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto Condemnation, ver. 34.* where the same Word is used again in the *Original*; neither the Etymology, nor common Use of the Word in other Places, much less will the Context here, suffer it to be understood of *eternal* Damnation, but rather of such *temporal* *Judgments*, which are design'd by Almighty GOD to keep us from being condemn'd with the wicked and impenitent World.

Thus we see in short, the whole scope and Design of the *Apostle* in this remarkable

The full scope of the *Apostle* summed up. Passage concerning the Holy Sacrament. From whence we may easily

easily observe, that all that can be reasonably inferr'd from what he here saith, is, That as it is a *Sin* not to pray, or fast, or give Alms, or hear God's Word aright; so it is a *Sin* too not to receive the *Lord's Supper* aright, or as we ought to do it. But as we must take heed how we hear, viii. 18. so we must take heed how we receive, that we may do it with that *Faith* and *Reverence* which becomes so Divine an *Institution*, and so heavenly a *Duty* as that is, lest otherwise we offend God, and provoke him to lay some heavy *Judgment* upon us; and except we repent, condemn us at last to everlasting Fire, as he justly may for any *Sin* that we stand guilty of before him. But it is a great Affront and Abuse put upon God's Holy Word, to make this an Excuse for our not frequenting the *Holy Communion*, when the *Apostle* designed it only for an Argument, why we should receive it always in a *worthy* and *decent* manner. And therefore this is the great and only Use we should make of it, that seeing He that eateth this Bread, and drinketh this Cup of the Lord unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body; therefore, as oft as we eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, we must take care to do it *worthily*, discerning the Lord's Body, and deporting our selves accordingly in receiving of it. Whensoever we are invited to this *Spiritual Wedding*, we must be sure to come; but we must be sure to come with our *Wedding-Garment on*, with such a Temper and Disposition of Mind, as becomes the Place, the Company, and the Feast we go to. For which purpose, we must prepare our selves before-hand, and put our Hearts into such a frame, that we may so feed upon the blessed Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour, that he may preserve both our Souls and Bodies to eternal Life. But then you'll say perhaps, this requires a great deal of time more than we can often spare from our necessary Employments.

And that is the reason that we do not receive so often as we otherways would. And I believe so too.

That

III. *Want of Leisure the great Reason why Men do not often communicate.*

That is the Reason, the great Reason of all, that this *Holy Sacrament* is so shamefully neglected by most People ! They know it is a very good Thing, and they would oft'ner partake of it, but that they have other Business of greater Consequence, as they wisely think, to mind ; so that they cannot find time enough to prepare themselves as they ought for it. As in the Parable, When a certain Man had made a great Supper, and sent his Servants to call those which he had invited to it, they all presently began to make excuse, *The first said to him, I have bought a piece of Ground, and I must needs go and see it ; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them ; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come,* Luke xiv. 18, 19, 20. So it is to this Day, *Christ* the eternal Son of God, at the Expence of his own Blood hath provided a Supper, his own *last Supper*, the best Feast that can be had on this side Heaven ; and all things being ready, he sends his Ministers to invite all that are admitted into his Church, to come and partake of it. But they all, or at least the far greatest Part, desire to be excused. And, if we would know the Reason, it is because they have other Business to do : One hath his Farm to look after, another his Shop, a third his Ware-house and Merchandize And so every one finds something or other to do ; any thing rather than come to the *Lord's Supper*. But these are but vain Excuses, like those in the Parable, designed on purpose to shew the Folly of those which made them. *The first had bought a piece of Ground, and must needs go and see it : Wherein he betray'd his Folly, in buying that which he had not seen. And so did the second, in buying five yoke of Oxen before he had proved them, to know whether they were fit for his turn. But the greatest Fool of all was the last, who said, I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come : As if*
his

his marrying a Wife could hinder him from coming to a Feast. Such are the Excuses that Men commonly make for their not coming when they are invited to our *Lord's Table*: They serve only to discover the weakness and folly of those which make them. For how can a Man betray the weakness of Judgment more, than by preferring the most inconsiderable, before the most valuable Things that are? Yet this is the Case of all, who at any time neglect the *Holy Communion* for any worldly Business. They prefer their Bodies before their Souls, the World before their Saviour: Earth, with all its Vanities and Troubles, before Heaven, and all the Glory that he is there preparing for all those who keep his Commandments. For otherwise they would never suffer any thing in this World to hinder them from doing what he hath commanded, for their more effectual obtaining *eternal Salvation* by him.

But this being the most common Objection against frequent Communion, let us look a little more narrowly into it, that we may see what cause Men have to make it. *First*, Some have none at all. Year there are many such: Many, who are not incumbered with the Affairs of this Life; having a sufficient Maintenance transmitted to them from their Ancestors, or else acquired already by God's Blessings upon their own Endeavours, whereby they are able to support themselves and their Families, without taking any farther care about it. I do not question but there are many such here present at this time. Now what can you plead for your not frequenting the *Holy Sacrament*? You cannot say, ye have not time to prepare your selves; For you have more upon your Hands than ye well know what to do with. And therefore are often forced to invent ways how to spend it, which usually are as bad as to sit still and do nothing. And is it not a sad thing, that you should

This Reason cannot be vassed.

Some have no Cause to make it.

should chuse to do nothing, or worse than nothing, rather than that which God himself set you, and hath given you so much time, on purpose that nothing might divert you from it? Remember, the time will come, when time will be no more: And then you will wish with all your Hearts, that you had employ'd it better while you had it. And I am sure there is no way possible for you to make better Advantage of it, than by spending it in *preparing* yourselves for the *Holy Communion*, and then *receiving* it accordingly. This being the best Course you can ever take, for your employing not only that, but all the rest of your *time* well. Whereas, if you still continue to neglect so great a Duty, notwithstanding that you have little or nothing else to do in the mean while: For my part I know not how you can answer it either to God, or your own Consciences; nor what account you can give either of your selves, or of your *time*, at the *Last Day*! But this I know, that you have but too much cause to suspect, and fear that all is not right within you: That whatsoever your *Temporal* Estate may seem, your *Spiritual* is very bad: And that all the Ease and Plenty which ye now enjoy, will hereafter serve to no other purpose than to encrease your Pain and Misery.

But there are others, who really have a great deal of worldly Business upon their Hands, more perhaps than they can well turn them to. But I would desire such to consider, that *worldly Business* they have, it

Others very little from worldly Business.

is still but the *Business* of this *World*, this *transient* and *uncertain World* that *soon* passeth away: That they have *another World* to live in as well as this; a *World* that will have *no End*. And if they take so much Care and Pains about their living a few Years, or perhaps a few Days upon Earth, they ought surely to be much more *careful* how to live *Eternally*; as they must either in Heaven, or Hell, either in the greatest Pleasure they can enjoy, or else in the greatest Pain they can endure. The difference betwixt which Two is so vastly great, that

that whosoever duly weighs and considers it, must needs be inclined to make it his chief Study and Business in this World, to prepare for the next: *To seek the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness*, in the first place, as our Saviour himself commands, *Matt. vi. 33*. And he who doth that, will be sure to order all his *Temporal* Affairs so that they shall never interfere with his *Spiritual*, but give place to them upon all Occasions. Although he be diligent and industrious in his *Calling*, yet if things so fall out, that he must either neglect that for a while, or else his daily Prayers, he doth not stand pausing which he had best do; as seeing there is no Comparison at all between them, the one having respect only to his present, the other to his future and *Eternal* State. And so for the *Holy Sacrament*, if he have an Opportunity put into his Hands of *receiving* that, he dares not let it slip upon any *worldly* Account whatsoever; as knowing that he may get more there, than all this World is worth; and lose more by the neglect of that, than of any other Opportunity that can be offered him.

This is the *Sense* and *Practice* of every wise and good Man in this case. But as for such, whose Heads and Hearts, as well as Hands, are so taken up with *worldly Business*, that they cannot or rather will not, spare so much time from that, as to prepare themselves for the Holy Communion, they plainly shew that they prefer the things of this Life, before their Duty to GOD; their Bodies before their Souls, and their *Temporal* before their *Eternal* Happiness and Welfare. These are the Men of this World, who have, or at least desire to have their Portion in this Life, rather than the next. And these are they which St. Paul speaks of, where he saith, *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose end is Destruction, whose GOD is their Belly, whose Glory is in their Shame, who mind earthly things*, Phil. iii. 18, 19. I wish there were none such among us at this time: If there be, it will be in vain to say much to them, their Hearts being so

full of this World, that there is no room left for sober and good Advice. And therefore I shall only desire, that when they are at leisure, they would remember our Saviour's Words, *What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul ! Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul ?* Matt. xvi. 26.

But some of those who thus live in a crowd of Cares for this present Life, may notwithstanding sometimes think of their *future* State, and then they resolve to set upon the Use of these *Means* which God hath appointed for their Salvation, and particularly the greatest of all, the *Holy Sacrament*, at least when their hurry of Business is over, which they hope may be in a Week or Fortnight's time; but in the mean while they desire to be excus'd.

Let us suppose that you are so resolv'd at present.

On account of which 'tis not to be deferred.

But are you sure that those Resolutions will hold, and that you will be in the same mind a Fortnight hence that ye are in now ? How do ye know but *other Business* may come in before that, which may distract your Thoughts as much, or more than that ye have now upon you ? But, above all, What Assurance have ye that ye shall *live* so long ? And what if ye should *dye*, as ye may, before that time ? What do ye think will then become of you ? If ye cannot fit your selves for the *Holy Sacrament*, Will ye be fit to *dye* ? No surely ! If ye be not *prepared* to appear before *Christ* at his *Holy Table*, you'll be much less prepared to appear before him at his *Judgment-Seat*, where you will receive your final and irrevocable Sentence from him. And therefore you had need to look about you, and to be always ready, as *Christ* himself requires you to be with his own Mouth, saying, *Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares,* Luke xxi. 34. Whence you may observe, that he who will be your Judge, hath fore-warned you, that the *Cares of this Life* will make you

you as unfit to appear before him, as *Surfeiting and Drunkenness* it self. And therefore, if you have any *Cure* of your *Souls*, take heed of the *Cares* of this *Life*, that they hinder you no longer from receiving his most *Blessed Body and Blood* as often as ye can; for if they do, they'll much more hinder you from giving a good account of your selves before his *Tribunal*. But as ye desire to be always ready for *Death* and *Judgment*, be always ready for that *Holy Sacrament*, which is the best Preparatory in the World for it. And for that purpose, whensoever ye are invited to our *Lord's Table*, think thus with your selves: I have now an Opportunity put into my Hands of partaking of the *Body and Blood* of ever Blessed *Saviour*, to preserve my *Body and Soul* to everlasting *Life*. It is true, I have at this time more than ordinary *Business* upon my Hands; but what is all this World in comparison of Everlasting *Life* and *Happiness*? And who knows whether I shall ever have such another Opportunity as long as I live? Do but, I say, think thus, and then let slip any such Opportunity if ye can: For my part, if ye have any regard for your immortal *Souls*, I believe it will be very difficult, if not impossible.

But that which deserves most to be considered in this Case, is the *Preparation* that is necessarily required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper. *IV. Want of due Preparation.*

Concerning which many whole Books have been written, and some so large, that the very reading of them requires more time than a good Christian need spend in the Duty it self. And this, I believe, hath discourag'd many from receiving the *Holy Sacrament* so often as they ought, and as they otherwise would. For meeting with such Books as make the *Preparation* to it so tedious and troublesome, that they cannot read and observe all that is there said about it, without laying aside all other *Business* for a long time together; they are quite disheartned from ever attempting it, but when they can find a time wherein they have nothing else to do; which to those who follow any *Calling*, as they ought, happens but very rarely: Who

therefore very rarely so much as think of it, especially if they chance to meet with such *Books*, as they sometimes may do, which make their *Preparation* so nice and ticklish a thing, that they despair of ever observing all the little *Rules* which are there laid down; and therefore seldom or never trouble their Heads about it; which shews what great *care* and *caution* should be used in treating upon this Subject, lest we raise such Scruples and Difficulties in it, which may deter Men

from the *Holy Sacrament*, instead of *Preparing* them for it. For my own part, I do not see but that whatsoever is generally necessary in order to it, may be brought

within a small Compass; for it may be all reduced to these few Heads:

First, To the receiving the *Lord's Supper* aright, it is necessary that we be rightly instructed in the *Nature* and *End* of it, that we may be able to *discern*, as the Apostle speaks, *the Lord's Body*, or understand the difference between that and our ordinary

Food; and so *know* what we do: Without which it is impossible for us to do it as we ought. But for this purpose we need not run over great Volumes; for we have every thing necessary to be known concerning it, briefly, but fully set down in our *Church Catechism*; so briefly, that a *Child* may learn it all; and yet so fully, that the greatest *Scholar* upon Earth need know no more, in order to his *worthy receiving* this *Holy Sacrament*. For there we have the End why it was Ordain'd, even, *For the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and of the Benefits which we receive thereby*. There we have both the parts of it describ'd and explain'd to us, that *Bread and Wine which the Lord commanded to be receiv'd, is the outward Part or Sign of the Lord's Supper*; and that the *Inward Part, or thing signified, is the Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received*

by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper. There we have also the Benefits whereof we are Partakers thereby, even the strengthening and refreshing our Souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine. In which few Words we have all things necessary to be known concerning this Holy Sacrament. in order to the worthy receiving of it: And they are all so Plain and Easy, that we cannot suppose that any one who is bred up in the Christian Religion, and is come to the Years of Discretion, can be ignorant of them. And if any be, it is but turning to the Catechism in their Common-Prayer-Book, and there they may find them. As they may all things else that are requisite for them either to know, or believe, or do, or desire that they may be saved.

In the next place, as in all our Addresses to Almighty God so, especially in this, we ought certainly to endeavour all we can to prepare our selves beforehand for it. For which purpose the Apostle lays down this general Rule, *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup,* 1 Cor. xi. 28. But he doth not tell us particularly what we should examine our selves about, because that may be easily gather'd from what he there saith concerning the Sacrament it self, and the Manner of receiving it. But lest we should be mistaken in it, our Church hath taken care to give us particular Directions about it, in the last Words of her Catechism, where she tells us, that it is requir'd of them who come to the Lord's Supper, *To Examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former Sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life; have a lively Faith in GOD's Mercy through Christ, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men.* Which Words are so plain, that they cannot be made plainer; and yet so full, that they contain all that can be truly and pertinently said on this Subject. If ye read all the Books that have been written; and all the Directions that are

2. A due Examination of our selves, as to Faith, Repentance and Charity.

there given about your *Preparation to the Lord's Supper*, you'll find a great many more Words; but all that are to the Purpose, amount to no more than what is here said. I do not deny but that the reading of such, or any other *Books of Devotions* that are written with that Care and Prudence which the Subject requires, may be a good help to bring your Minds into a fit Temper and Disposition for the *Blessed Sacrament*. But still this is the Sum and Substance of all that you need to do in order to it, even to set apart some time beforehand, wherein to *examine* your selves, whether you *truly repent* of your former Sins, so as *stedfastly* to purpose for the future to *lead a new Life*: Whether you have a *lively Faith* in GOD's Mercies through Christ, joined with a *thankful Remembrance* of his Death: And whether ye be in *Charity* with all Men. And if upon due Examination ye find, that ye have such *Repentance*, such *Faith*, and such *Charity* as this is, which be sure all true Christians have, you need not doubt but that you are *fit* to receive the *Holy Sacrament*, and ought accordingly to do it. But that ye may be more fully assured of it, Especially at the time of receiving, the Church it self is pleased to tell you it in the Exhortation at the same time, saying, *Judge therefore your selves, Brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord; Repent you truly for your Sins past, have a lively and stedfast Faith in Christ our Saviour, amend your Lives, and be in perfect Charity with all Men. So shall ye be meet partakers of these Holy Mysteries.* And therefore she afterwards invites all that are so prepared, to *draw near with Faith*, and to *receive the Holy Sacrament to their Comfort*.

This therefore is all that is necessarily required to the *worthy receiving* of the Lord's Supper. But all this may be easily done by any true Christian. It requires no great Parts, or Learning, nor Time neither for a Man to look into his own Heart, to review his Life, to consider wherein he hath hither to done amiss, and to resolve by GOD's Blessing to do so no more, but to endeavour all he can to lead for the future a new and Holy Life, as becomes the Gospel of Christ. This is no more than:

than what many do every Day, or at least very often, whether they are to receive the *Holy Sacrament* or no: And so are always ready, whensoever they can get an opportunity to receive it. Especially, if they have been long accustomed to it. For by this Means their *Repentance, Faith, Charity*, and all other Graces, being kept in continual Exercise, and receiving Strength and Nourishment from the Body and Blood of Christ frequently communicated unto them; They by degrees grow up into Habit and Custom, so as to be ready upon all Occasions to exert and put forth themselves with Ease and Pleasure. And therefore such

happy Persons need not spend much time in their *actual Preparation* for the Holy Communion, as having such an *habitual Disposition*, whereby they are al-

These Qualifications are never wanting to Dispositions habitually good.

way duly qualified and prepared for it. Inasmuch, that if they happen to come into a place where it is administered, although they did not know or think of it before they came, yet they can receive the Benefit and Comfort of it, and bless God for giving them such an opportunity, which they did not look for; but being put into their Hands, they cannot but take hold of it, and improve it to their best Advantage.

These, I confess, may seem to be of the higher Rank of *Christians*, to which few ascend in the ordinary Way, without more than ordinary Care and Diligence in the Use of those Means, which by the Grace of God accompanying them, lead up to it. But we must not think, as some have done, that none but such as these should receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: For that was intended for all that believe in Christ, and are baptized in his Name: Yea, they are all commanded to do this in remembrance of Him, one as well as another; the Weak as well as the Strong in Faith. The Weak, that they may be Strong; and the Strong, that they may not be Weak again, but rather grow stronger and stronger, till they come unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Eph.

iv. 13. I know there are many *ignorant*, though perhaps *well-meaning Persons* among us; yea, and some who pretend to great *Knowledge* in the *Mysteries* of our *Religion*, who yet think, that *none* but *Great Men*, and *Eminent Saints* should come to the *Holy Sacrament*; they who have *attained* already to such an *Excellent* and *Divine* Temper of Mind, as to live always above this *World*, and out of the reach of the Devil and his *Temptations*: But as for others who are conscious to themselves of their *Daily Infirmities*, and are often in danger of being over-powered by one *Temptation* or other; they must by no means *venture* upon it. But this is certainly a very great and *dangerous Mistake*, and one of the Devil's *Tricks* to keep Men off from using the best *Weapons*, whereby to resist and conquer him: For all Christ's *Disciples* are equally bound by his *Command* to *do this in remembrance of Him*. And all have equally need of it. If any *want* it more than others, it must be such whose *Faith* is so weak, as not

to be able as yet to *overcome the World, the Flesh and the Devil*; And both may, and must be acquired by *Christians of a lower Class*; but are still wrestling and fighting with these their *Spiritual Enemies*; and therefore have need of all the

Aids and Assistance, which the Captain of our Salvation hath provided in that case: Of which the *receiving* his most Blessed *Body and Blood* was always found to be the most powerful and prevalent.

But that it may be so to them, it is necessary that such Persons take Pains in *preparing* themselves for it. They must look back upon their *Lives*, and bring to their remembrance as many as they can of their former *Sins*, especially such as they have been most guilty of; and whereby they have most *offended* and *dishonoured* Almighty God; and must not only abhor, and humble themselves for them, but also resolve *never* to commit them any more. They must search *narrowly* into their own *Hearts*, to find out the weakest side, and resolve to set a *stronger Watch*.

This Preparation not difficult.

Watch and Guard than they us'd to do about it. They must *bethink* themselves what sort of *Temptations* they have been most subject to, and *oftenest* overcome by; and must resolve *never* to give way to them any more, but to withstand them with all their Might. They must *consider* what *Place*, what *Company*, what *Employment*, what *Recreations*, or other *Circumstances* of their Life, have expos'd them most to such *Temptations*, and have been the chief *Occasions* of their falling into *Sin*, and must resolve for the future to forsake and avoid them. They must *consult* their *own* Breasts; to know how they have perform'd their Duties to God, and us'd the *Means* that he hath *appointed*, for their *obtaining* Grace at his hands; how they have fasted, and watched; how they have prayed both in publick and private; how they have read, and heard God's Holy Word; and how they have *received* the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: Whether they have lived in the Neglect of some or other of these Necessary Duties, or else performed them in a *careless* and *superficial manner*; and must resolve to become *constant*, and more *heartly* and *sincere* in all and every one of them, than hitherto they have been. They must *examine* themselves, whether they be in *Charity*, and in the *Faith*; whether they really believe all the Articles of the *Christian Religion*, and have a sure *Trust* and *Confidence* in *Christ* their Saviour, and in all the Promises which God hath made to *Mankind* in him, and must resolve to *continue* firm and stedfast in the same unto the End. And they must make all these Holy *Resolutions*, not in their *own*, but in the Name of *Jesus Christ*, *believing* and *depending* upon him for *Grace* and *Power* to perform them, so as to live *accordingly* for the future all the rest of their Days. In short, They must call to mind the solemn *Vow* and *Promise* which they made to God, when they were admitted into his Church by the Sacrament of *Baptism*; and must now *renew* and *ratifie* the same at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, faithfully *promising* again to him, and *purposing* with themselves by his Assistance *to believe and do as they then promised, and to continue in the same unto their Lives End.* They

They who have thus prepar'd themselves for the Lord's Supper, whensoever it is *administred*, may, and ought most *thankfully* to receive it, not doubting but they shall *find* Favour and Acceptance with GOD, and great *Benefit* and *Advantage* to themselves by it, through his Merits and *Intercession*, whose *Body* and *Blood* they there receive. And yet all this may be *easily* and *soon* done by any of Christ's Disciples; by those of the lowest, as well as of the highest Forms in the School. Yea, it ought to be *often* done by all at other times, as well as when they are to receive the *Holy Communion*. It is true, it is in a *particular manner* requisite and necessary, that a Man *examine* himself before he *eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*; because unless a Man first *knows* the true State of his Soul, he will not *know* how to make a right use of what he there receives, to his Spiritual *Advantage*. The *Sacrament* of Christ's *Body* and *Blood* is an *universal* Remedy for all the Distempers of our Souls. But except a Man *knows* where his Distemper lyes, and what part is most affected, he can't apply the *Medicine* to it, and so can receive no *Benefit* from it. But howsoever we must not think that *Self-Examination* is a Duty to be performed only upon that Occasion. For he who never *examines* himself, but only when he

is to receive the *Holy Sacrament*,
Because Self-Ex- had need to receive it very of-
amination is neces- ten, or else he will be a great
sary at other times, Stranger to himself, not know-
as well as when ing what Condition he is in, nor
we receive. what Progress he makes in the

Way to Heaven; but rather will have just cause to suspect he goes backward, and grows worse and worse every Day. And therefore he who is really solicitous about his Future State, as all true Christians be sure are, can't but often reflect upon himself, and upon his present Condition, although he have not an opportunity of partaking of Christ's *Body* and *Blood* as yet, to make it better. And if he lives in a *place*, as many do, where such Opportunities are
feldom

seldom to be had, he must notwithstanding, *often* call himself to account, look into the State of his Soul, and settle all his Spiritual Affairs, as solemnly as if he was to *receive* the *Holy Sacrament* immediately upon it. By this means he will be always prepared for it, and always longing and thirsting after it, and ready to catch at the next Opportunity he can get of *receiving* it. And in the mean while he may make a shift to keep up his Mind in a pretty good temper, through the *Grace* and *mercy* of GOD; who knowing that it is not his own fault that he doth not actually receive the *Holy Sacrament*, will be graciously pleased, as we have good ground to believe, to make up the want of it some other way.

But, Blessed be GOD for it, this is not our Case, who may receive the *Holy Communion* every *Lord's day* in the Year, and oftener too if we have a mind to it. How happy would some good People think themselves, if they could have such Opportunities as these are? And how miserable shall we be, if we neglect and slight them? For my part, I do not see how we shall be able to answer it either to GOD, or to our selves another Day. Neither do I know what *Excuse* or *Pretence* any can have for it, besides those which we have now refuted: Except it be this one, which some have made to themselves, even, that they have been several Times at the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, but have not found that *Benefit* and *Comfort* from it, which they expected, and therefore think it to no purpose for them to receive it *oftener* than they are obliged to do it, in order to their continuing in the Communion of the Church.

This I know hath been a great stumbling-Block to many well-meaning People, and therefore I shall endeavour to remove it out of the way, as clearly as I can. For which purpose we may *first* observe, that what GOD *commands* us to do, we are therefore to do it, be-

V. Want of Improvement under the use of these Means, another Objection against frequent Communion.

cause

cause he *commands* it, whether we can get any thing by it or no. Otherwise we do it not for *his* Sake, but our own: Not in Obedience to his Command, but in Hopes of Profit and Advantage to our selves whereby it ceaseth to be a good Work, or any way acceptable to GOD, in that we do not respect *him*, but our *selves*, and so prefer our selves before him in it: As in our present Case, We are commanded by GOD, our Saviour, to do this *in remembrance of Him*. Now if we do it only in expectation of gaining something to our selves by it, we do not regard, or obey *him* at all in it: In that we neither do it therefore *because he commanded it*, nor *as he commanded it* to be done. For he commanded it to be done in *Remembrance of Him*; and so made that, not our *Profit*, the chief *End* of his *Institution*. And therefore, although he hath commanded us nothing but what is really for our Good, and that this is so in an high and special manner, yet we must not make that our End in doing it, but we must *eat this Bread and drink this Cup in Remembrance of Him*, whether we receive any Benefit from it or no; yea, although we were sure to have none: And so do it in pure and sincere Obedience to his *Commandment*. Which, whosoever doth, will be sure one time or other to find the *Benefit and Comfort* of it, though not perhaps at present.

For the Blessed *Body and Blood of Christ*, received, as it ought to be, with a quick

How the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ operates upon, and improves us.

and lively *Faith*, will most certainly have its desired Effect. But it operates for the most part, upon our *Souls*, as our ordinary Food doth upon our *Bodies*, insensibly and by degrees. We *eat and drink* every Day, and by that means our *Bodies* grow to their full stature, and are then kept up in *Life, Health and Vigour*, though we our selves know not how this is done, nor perhaps take any notice of it. So *it* is with this Spiritual Meat and Drink, which GOD hath prepared for our *Souls*. By eating and drink-

drinking frequently of it, we grow by degrees in Grace, and in the *Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, and still continue stedfast and active in the true *Faith and Fear of GOD*; though after all, we may be no way sensible how this wonderful Effect is wrought in us, but only as we find it to be so by our own Experience. And if we do that, we have no cause to complain that we get nothing by it; for we get more than all the World is worth; being strengthened in the inward Man, and so made more fit for the Service of GOD, more constant in it, and more able to perform it: Or at least are kept from falling back, and preserved from many Sins and Temptations, which otherwise we might be exposed to: And this surely is enough to make any one that really minds the good of his Soul, to *hunger and thirst* after this Bread and Water of Life, and to *eat and drink* it as often as he can, although he do not presently feel the happy Effect of it, as some have done, and as he himself sometimes may, when GOD seeth it necessary or convenient for him. In the mean while he may rest satisfied in his *Mind*, that he is in the way that *Christ* hath made to *Heaven*; and thank GOD for giving him so many Opportunities of partaking of *Christ's Body and Blood*, and also Grace to lay hold of them, to improve them to his own unspeakable Comfort, such as usually attends the worthy receiving of the *Lord's Supper*: Whereby we are not only put in mind of the great Sacrifice which the Son of GOD offered for our Sins, but likewise have it actually communicated unto us, for our Pardon and Reconciliation to the Almighty Governor of the World, which is the greatest Comfort we can have on this side *Heaven*; so great, that we shall never be able to express it unto others, how deeply soever we may be affected with it in our selves. And though we be not always thus sensibly cheerful and refreshed with it, as we could wish to be, howsoever we can never receive the Blessed Sacrament, but we have the Pleasure and Satisfaction of having done our Duty to our Maker and Redeemer, which far

exceeds all the Comforts of this Life, and therefore may well stay our Stomachs till GOD sees good to give us more.

But let us now suppose, that a Man hath been often at our Lord's Table, and yet hath *When it has not that good Effect 'tis the Fault of the Man, not of the Institution.* seldom or never received any real Benefit or Comfort from it, not so much as that which ariseth from our reflecting upon our having done what our Saviour commanded us. This, I confess, may be the Case of some Persons. But then such should consider where the Fault lyes: It cannot lye in the Institution it self: That can never fail of producing the same Effect, where it is duly observed at one time as well as at another. And therefore the Fault must be in the Persons themselves; they do not duly observe the Institution, and then it is no wonder if they be never the better for it. Now there are two things required to the due Observation of it: First, That Men come rightly prepared to the Holy Sacrament; and then, that they receive it aright.

They who fail either of these Ways, must blame themselves if they miss of what they expected from it. What is necessary to the preparing our selves for it, I have already spoken of, and have shewn, that it is no more than what may be easily done, if Men will but set themselves in good earnest about it. But if Men will not do that, but come to the Lord's Table as they do to their own, without putting themselves, by GOD's Assistance, into a right Temper and Disposition for it, they have no Ground to expect any Advantage by it. For they are not Subjects capable of those Spiritual Profits and Pleasures which are there exhibited. Their Hearts are not towards them, but rather bent quite another Way, and therefore cannot possibly be touched or affected by Them. What wonderful Power hath the Sun upon Plants and Seeds in the Earth, to make them grow and

1st. Right Preparation.

Men will but set themselves in good earnest about it. But if Men will not do that, but come to the Lord's Table as they do to their own, without putting themselves, by GOD's Assistance, into a right Temper and Disposition for it, they have no Ground to expect any Advantage by it. For they are not Subjects capable of those Spiritual Profits and Pleasures which are there exhibited. Their Hearts are not towards them, but rather bent quite another Way, and therefore cannot possibly be touched or affected by Them. What wonderful Power hath the Sun upon Plants and Seeds in the Earth, to make them grow and

and bring forth Fruit? And yet such *Plants* or *Seeds* which are rotten, corrupted, or not rightly set and disposed as they ought to be, are never the better for the *Influences* of the *Sun*, but remain just as they were, how long soever it *shines* upon them. So it is here; *Christ* the *Sun* of *Righteousness* shines most powerfully in his Church, especially at the *Commemoration* of the great Eclipse which he once suffered, as they find by Experience, who come duly prepared to it, being so quickened, enlivened, actuated and strengthened by it, that they bring forth *Love*, *Joy*, *Peace*, *Long-suffering*, *Goodness*, *Faith*, and all the other Fruits of *God's Holy Spirit*, as they are reckoned up by his *Apostle*, Gal. v. 22, 23. Whereas they who are disordered and out of tune, and will not take Pains to put themselves into a suitable *Temper* and *Disposition* for it, they are no way wrought upon, or influenced by it, but still continue barren and unfruitful. And so all must needs do, who come not *rightly* qualified to the *Holy Sacrament*, they cannot truly eat of the blessed *Body* and *Blood* of *Christ*; and if they did, they could not digest it into proper Food and Nourishment for their Souls. And so can receive no real *Profit* or *Advantage* by it. Which, notwithstanding, should not discourage any from coming as oft as they can to the *Lord's Table*, but should rather excite them to *prepare* themselves always as well as they can for it. For then they will never complain of *unprofitableness* any more. But let them come as often as they please, they will every time go home better than they came, if they do but come thus rightly disposed, to receive the *Body* and *Blood* of *Christ*, which is there communicated to them, and then likewise receive it also as they ought.

How they ought to *receive* it, is the next Question to be consider'd. And it had need be consider'd very seriously by all 2. *Receiving aright.* that expect any Benefit from the *Lord's Supper*. For although they come with never so good a *Disposition* to it, yet unless they keep themselves in the same while they are at it, and actually partake

Take of Christ's *Body* and *Blood*, according to his *Holy Institution*, their Expectations will be all frustrated. For the great Benefit which we receive from this *Holy Sacrament*, is the *strengthening and refreshing our Souls*, by the *Body and Blood of Christ*, as our *Bodies* are by *Bread and Wine*. But as our *Bodies* cannot be strengthened or refreshed by *Bread and Wine*, unless we eat and drink it; so neither can our *Souls* be so by the *Body and Blood of Christ*, unless we actually partake of it. But our *Souls* cannot actually partake of the *Body and Blood of Christ* any other way, than by some Act of their own; even by acting their Faith in what is there signified and represented to them. What we there see with our bodily Eyes, although consecrated to an Holy Use, it is still in its own Nature plain *Bread and Wine*, which may strengthen and refresh our *Bodies*, but can have no such Influence or Effect upon our *Souls*, as being of a quite different Nature from them. But by *Faith* we look upon them as the Signs and Symptoms of Christ's *Body and Blood*, and receive them as such upon his Word; which, as I have shewn, is a mighty strengthening and refreshing to our *Souls*. But we can never thus receive Christ's *Body and Blood*, nor so much as discern it any other way but by a quick and lively *Faith*; but that, as the Apostle saith, *is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. The *Body and Blood of Christ* is not seen in the *Holy Sacrament*, but *Faith* doth plainly evidence; yea, it self is the *Evidence* of it to us. So that by *Faith* I am as fully perswaded of it, as if I saw it. And although we do not see it there, ye we hope for it, because of Christ's Word; and what we thus hope for, our *Faith* is the *Substance* of it to us, causing it to subsist and operate in us as effectually to all Intents and Purposes, as we can expect or desire, for the strengthening and refreshing of our *Souls*. Whereas without such a *Faith* as this, we can receive nothing but *Bread and Wine*, and by consequence no Spiritual Benefit or Comfort.

fort at all from the *Holy Sacrament*. And that is the reason, why according to the appointment of our Church, at the Distribution of the Sacramental Bread, we say to every Communicant, *Take, and eat this in Remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy Heart by Faith*; whereby every one is put in mind in the very Act of receiving, that he must there feed upon Christ *by Faith*, as the only means whereby he can partake of his *Body and Blood*, so as to receive Strength and Nourishment to his Soul from that Holy Feast.

For indeed the whole *Stress* of this *great Work* lyes upon our *Faith*. Unless that be duly exerted and acted, though Men come to the *Lord's Table*, and feed upon the outward Elements, which are there given them, this is not to eat the *Lord's Supper*; for that is a *Spiritual Banquet*, which cannot be so much as tasted of any otherwise than *by Faith*. And therefore they, who do not receive it with *Faith*, have no cause to complain that they are never the better for *receiving* the *Lord's Supper*, For they do really *receive* it no more, than as if they were not present where it is administered; and so can expect no more Benefit from it, than from Food or Physick which they do not take. But this should not dishearten any from coming to the *Lord's Supper* as often as they can; but should make them more careful to *receive* it always as they ought, with *Faith*; and then they can never fail of their Expectations from it: But will always receive as much, and often more than they could expect.

By this we may see how we ought to *receive* the *Lord's Supper*; if we desire to partake of the Benefits of it, we must receive it with *Faith*. And hence it is that *our Church* hath, in her great Wisdom, so contriv'd that incomparable Office which she hath made for the Administration of this *Holy Sacrament*; that from the Beginning to the End of it, there is Matter and Occasion given us all along, for the Exercise of our *Faith* in Christ, and the Promises which *GOD* hath made us in him, that so we may be sure to partake of his most

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Blessed *Body and Blood* and of all the Merits of his Death, whensoever we meet together for the Celebration of it. Which that I may the better demonstrate, and likewise shew how we should act our *Faith* all the while that we are at our *Lord's Table*, so as to receive Spiritual Strength and Comfort from it, it will not be amiss if we go through the whole *Office*, especially so much of it as is, or ought to be always used when there is a *Communion*, and not at any other time.

All from the Beginning of the Service, to the End of the Prayer, for Christ's *Holy Catholick Church*, is appointed to be read upon *Sundays*

The Excellency of our Communion-Service, for obtaining the End of that Ordinance, exemplified.

and *Holy Days*, although there be no *Communion*: But if there be a *Communion* in the *Church* upon any other Day as well as those, it ought to be read. And therefore it will be expedient to premise something concerning that, at

least so much, that we may understand the Design of it, and how it makes way for our better performing of this great Duty.

This *Service*, therefore, being appointed for the *Communion* of the *Body and Blood* of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, as it is to be *all*, and *always* read at his *Table*, by one of his *Ministers*; so it begins with his *Prayer*, the Prayer which he himself composed, and left

In the Use of the Lord's Prayer at the Holy Table.

to his *Church* as a standing general Form, to be used by all *Persons*, at all *Times*, and upon all *Occasions*; to which it is fitted in such a wonderful manner, as sufficiently shews both

the Author and Intent of it. To

The particular Prayer before the Commandments.

this is subjoined a short Prayer for this particular Occasion, that God would be pleased to cleanse the *Thoughts* of our *Hearts*, by the *Inspiration* of his *Holy Spirit*, that

we may perfectly love him, and worthily magnifie his *Holy Name*, in keep ng his *Commandments*, which immediate y
after

after are so solemnly repeated in his Name by one of his *Ministers*, standing at his *Table*, that we may, and ought to hearken to them with the same Attention, Reverence and godly Fear, as if GOD himself pronounced them again to us, as he did to the *Israelites* from Mount *Sinai*, with *Thunderings* and *Lightnings*, and the Noise of the Angelick *Trumpets* sounding in our Ears, *Exod. xx. 1, 18.* While we are thus hearkening to these Divine Laws, distinctly published and proclaimed to every one of us in particular, we cannot but every one call to mind his *own Sins*, whereby he hath *offended* against these Laws, and how unable he hath been to keep any one of them as he ought, without the Grace of GOD, and therefore we have no sooner heard any of them repeated, but we immediately beg of GOD mercifully to pardon our former *Transgressions* of it, and to give us Grace to observe it for the future, saying after the Repetition of each *Commandment*, from the bottom of our Hearts, as well as with our Mouth, *Lord, have Mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.* All which must needs be acknowledged to be of great use to our due *Commemoration* of that Death which the Son of GOD suffered for these our Sins, and to our Partaking of his *Body* and *Blood* for the Pardon of them, and for Grace to walk hereafter in all the *Commandments* of the Lord, blameless. For though we did examine our selves *privately* before, in the special Presence of GOD himself, openly declaring and making known his Laws particularly unto us, whereby our Sins and Infirmities are brought afresh to our Remembrance, and we come to the *Holy Sacrament* with an actual sense of them upon our Minds, and so are better able to apply the great Remedy which is there prepared for our Ease and Cure. Upon which account I cannot but admire the *Prudence* as well as *Piety* of our Church, in appointing the *Commandments* to be *publicly* read upon this Occasion.

The *Commandments* of Almighty GOD having been thus

thus solemnly read to us, in Obedience to them we first pray, as we are bound to do in every distinct Service, for his *Viceregent* upon Earth, and then for *ourselves* and *Brethren* in the *Collect* for the Day; which, if it be an *Holy Day*, hath respect to the Blessing we then commemorate, otherwise it is for some special Grace or mercy that we have all need of.

The Collects for the Queen, and the Day.

After this follows the *Epistle*, that is, some part of those *Epistles* which St. Paul or other Apostles wrote by the *Inspiration* of GOD, wherein we are

The Epistle.

usually reminded of some of those Duties which we heard before enjoined us in the *Commandments*, or upon some particular Occasions, some other *Portion* of Scripture relating to that *Occasion*. Then follows the *Gospel*, or some of the Divine *Sayings*, or *Acts* of our Blessed Saviour, as they are record-

The Gospel read standing.

ed by one of the Four *Evangelists*, which never alters. There is never any other *Portion* of Scripture appointed for the *Gospel*, as there is for the *Epistle*. But that is always taken out of the very *Gospel* it self. By which means we always hear something which *Christ* himself spake with his Divine Mouth for our Instruction when he was upon Earth: Or else something which he did by his Divine Power for the Confirmation of our Faith in him. Hence it is, that at the Reading of the *Gospel*, the People are all requir'd to stand up, not only to shew their *Readiness* to stand by, and defend it to the last; but likewise to express their Respect and Reverence to *Christ* himself, whose *Gospel* it is, and whose Words and Works they hear rehearsed; and therefore must needs stand up to *hearken diligently* to them, as they would have certainly done, if they had been near him when he spake or did them, And hence also it is, that in the first *Common-Prayer-Book* which was put out by King *Edward* the Sixth, so soon as the *Minister* had said, *The Holy Gospel is written in such a Chapter,*

ter, the People were order'd to say, *Glory be to thee, O Lord*, to testifie their *Acknowledgment*, that he, whose *Gospel* they were now to hear, is their Lord and Master, the Great, and Almighty G O D; that all *Glory* and *Honour* is due to him for revealing this *Gospel* to them, and accordingly to *adore* and worship him for it. As all should do when they pronounce these Words.

So soon as the *Gospel* is read, the *Nicene Creed* begins; which it self also contains the Sum and Substance of the *The Nicene Creed Gospel*; and therefore is appointed to be said or sung by *all the People*, standing in the same Posture as they did in *hearing* of the *Gospel*. And that, I suppose, is the reason why, although after the reading of the *Epistle*, the Minister is to say, *Here endeth the Epistle*; yet after the reading of the *Gospel* he is not to say, *Here endeth the Gospel*, (as many, who do not consider the *Rubrick*, are wont to do) because the *Gospel* doth not properly end there, but *continues* to be declar'd and publish'd in the following *Creed*: In which are briefly comprehended all the great Articles of that *Holy Religion* which Christ hath reveal'd to us in his *Gospel*: And therefore it ought to be jointly repeated by all the People there present, that all may thereby publickly own and profess their *Belief* of all and every one of those *Articles*, and so of the whole *Gospel* of Christ, in order to their being admitted to the *Holy Communion*: Which otherwise they ought not to be.

After this *Creed* there follows one of the *Homilies* or *Sermons* set forth by Authority, or else one compos'd by the Minister himself, for the fuller Explanation of some part of the said *Creed*, or else of the *Commandments* before repeated; which therefore comes in very properly in this place, after the *Summary* of that *Christian Doctrine* according to which all *Sermons* ought to be framed. After *Sermon*, the *Priest* returns to the *Lord's Table*, and then begins the *The Offertory*.
Offertory, reading some Sentences of

of *Holy Scripture* chosen out on purpose to excite and stir up the People to give, every one according to his Ability, some thing to *pious* and *charitable* Uses. And while these *Sentences* are in reading, the *Deacons*, *Church-wardens*, or some fit Persons appointed for that purpose, gather the *Alms* and other *Devotions* of the People, and bring them to the Priest, who humbly presents, and placeth them upon the *Lord's Table*, as devoted to him, and then he begins the Prayer for the whole State of *Christ's Church Militant* here on Earth.

Thus much of the *Communion Service*, even from the Beginning of it to the End of the aforesaid Prayer for *Christ's Catholick Church*, is to be said upon *Sundays* or other *Holy-Days*, although there be *no* Communion,

*The Prayer for
Christ's Church Mi-
litant.*

for want of a sufficient Number to communicate with the *Priest*. In the first Common-Prayer-Book of *K. Edward* the Sixth, it was order'd that the *Priest*, although there were *none* to communicate with him, shall say all things at the Altar appointed to be said at the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, until after the *Offertory*, upon *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, without any mention of *Sundays* and *Holy-Days*. From whence it appears, that they took it for granted, that there would be always a sufficient Number of Communicants, upon every *Sunday* and *Holy-Day* at the least; so that they could not so much as suppose there would be no Communion upon any of those Days. But it seems they feared that upon other Days there might be sometimes none to communicate with the *Priest*, and so *no* Communion. And therefore order'd, that if it should so happen for a whole Week together, yet nevertheless upon the *Wednesdays* and *Fridays* in every Week so much shall be said of the Communion Service as is before limited. But afterwards, as Piety grew colder, the *Sacrament* began to be more and more neglected, and by degrees quite laid aside upon the *Week-Days*. And then the Church did not think it convenient to order any of the Service appointed for it to be read upon any other

other Days but only upon *Sundays* and *Holy-Days*; but upon those Days she still requires that, although there be no Communion, yet all shall be said that is appointed at the Communion, until the End of the General Prayer (for the good Estate of the Catholick Church of Christ) together with one or more of the *Collects* at the End of the

*To be read upon
Sundays and Holy
Days, though there
are not Communi-
cants enough.*

Communion-Service, concluding with the Blessing.

And verily there is great reason it should be so. Not only because it is fitting that *Devotions* should be longer upon those than they are upon other *Days*: But likewise there are several things particular in that part of the Service which requires it.

Here are the *Commandments* of Almighty God, the Supreme Law-giver of the World, which it is requisite that People should hear, and be put in mind of, at least upon those *Days* which are dedicated to his Service. Here is the *Collect*, *Epistle* and *Gospel* proper to many *Sundays*, and to all *Holy-Days* in the Year, without which they could not be distinguish'd from one another, nor from other Days, nor by consequence celebrated, so as to answer the End of their *Institution*, unless they were read upon their proper Days. Here is the *Nicene Creed*, wherein the *Divinity* of our Blessed Saviour is asserted and declared, and therefore very proper to be said or sung upon those Days which are kept in memory of *him*, and of his *Apostles*, by whom that Doctrine, together with our whole Religion grounded upon it, was planted and propagated in the World. Here is the *Offertory* and choice Sentences of Scripture, read to stir up People to offer unto God something of what he hath given them, as their acknowledgment that he gives them all they have, and that they hold it all of him; which, howsoever it be now generally neglected, except there be a *Communion*, yet People ought certainly to be put in mind of it at least upon all *Holy-Days*, and especially upon the *Lord's own Day*, according to his *own Order*, written by his Apostle St. Paul,

1 Cor.

1 Cor. xvi. 2. Here, among others, is the *Prayer* for the whole State of *Christ's Church Militant* here on Earth; and it is but reason that we, as Fellow-members of the same Body, should join together in it upon all the great *Festivals* of the Year, which are generally celebrated by the whole *Church* we pray for, and by that means testify our *Communion* with it. And besides, this, as well as the other part of the Communion Service, is performed at the *Communion-Table*, the place where the Primitive Church used to perform its public *Devotions*; and ours, which

And to be read at in all things else is conformable to
the Communion- that, cannot but imitate it in this
Table. particular, at least, so far as to
 have some part of its Service per-

form'd at the same place upon *Sundays* and *Holy-Days*, although there be *no* Communion.

But the main Reason why so much of the Communion Service is order'd to be read upon *Sundays* and other *Holy-Days*, notwithstanding that there is *no* Communion, seems to be, that the Church may shew her Readiness to administer it upon *these* Days, and so that it is not hers nor the *Ministers*, but the People's fault, if there be *no* Communion. For the *Minister*, by her Order, goes up to the *Lord's Table*, and there begins the Service appointed for the *Communion*, and goes on as far as he can, 'till he come to the actual *Celebration* of it, and if he stops there, it is only because there are none, or not a sufficient Number of Persons to *Communicate* with him: For if there were, he was bound and is ready to *consecrate* and administer it to them. And, therefore, if there be *no* Communion upon any *Sunday* or *Holy-Day* in the Year, the People only are to be blamed, and must answer for it another Day. The *Church* hath done her part in ordering it, and the *Minister* his in observing that Order: And if the People would do theirs too, the Holy Communion would be constantly celebrated in every Parish Church in *England*, every *Sunday* and *Holy-Day* throughout the Year. Neither can they plead *Ignorance* in the Case, or say they

they did not think it their Duty to *communicate* so often. For every time they see the Minister go up to the *Communion Table*, and there read part of the *Service* appointed for the *Holy Communion*, they are put in mind of their Duty, and upbraided with their Neglect of it. From all which we may observe by the way, how much those *Ministers* are to be blamed, who ever omit this part of the *Service*, or do not perform it at the place appointed for it. How they can answer it to God, to the *Church*, to their *People*, or to themselves, for my part I know not.

That so the People may be reminded of their Duty, and upbraided with their Neglect of it.

Having thus briefly run over so much of the *Communion Service* as is to be read when there is no Communion, as well as when there is, we are now come to that part of it which never is, nor can be used, but only when the *Holy Communion* is actually *administred*. And, therefore, is chiefly to be consider'd in our present Design, of shewing how we may and ought to receive it, so as to find the *Benefit* and *Comfort* of it. For which purpose we may observe, that after the *Prayer for Christ's Holy Catholick Church*, before-mentioned, the *Minister*, who is always a *Priest*, seeing a competent Number of Devout Christians ready and desirous to partake of the *Body* and *Blood* of our Blessed Redeemer, first reads to them a grave, pious, and pathetic *Exhortation*, to consider what they

The Exhortation.

are about to do; of how great Benefit it will be to them, if with *true penitent Heart* and a *lively Faith*, they receive that *Holy Sacrament*; how dangerous to receive the same *unworthily*; how they should come to it; what Cause they have to give their most hearty Thanks to the most *Holy Trinity*, for the Redemption of the World by *Jesus Christ*, who ordained these Holy Mysteries as *Pledges of his Love*, and for the continual Remembrance of his Death, to our great and endless Comfort. All which is so clear and affectionately expressed,

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fed,

fed, that it contributes very much to the making up the Defects of their *Preparation* for it, and to raise their Minds into such an Holy and Devout Temper, as to be capable both of performing this great Duty aright, and of receiving the Benefits and Comforts of it.

The *Exhortation* being ended, the *Minister* (in the Name of Christ and his Church)

The Invitation.

inviteth all who are thus Godly disposed, to the Lord's Supper,

saying to them, *Draw near with Faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your Comfort.* He invites them first to *draw near*, thereby putting them in Mind, that they are now invited into Christ's more special Presence, to sit down with him at his own Table, that so they may be as near to him as they can be in this World; and therefore, as an Emblem thereof, should come from the more remote Parts of the *Church*, as near to the said Table as they may. But then he adviseth them, to draw near *with Faith*, as without which, all their bodily Approaches will avail them nothing, it being only *by Faith* that they can really draw near to *Christ*, and take this *Holy Sacrament* to their Comfort. And therefore they should take special Notice of this *Expression*, used on purpose in this place, to stir up their pure Minds, by way of Remembrance, to keep their *Faith* in continual Exercise all the while that they are at our *Lord's Table*, so as to look upon him as there present with them, observing all the Motions both of their Souls and Bodies, and ready to communicate his own most *Blessed Body* and *Blood* unto them, to preserve their Souls and Bodies to everlasting Life. But seeing they cannot act their *Faith* as they ought in Christ, who died for their Sins, until they have confessed and repented of them; therefore he calls upon them to make their humble *Confession* to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon their Knees.

And now all that are to communicate, being prostrate upon their Knees, as so many guilty Malefactors before the

The Confession.

Judge of the World, do in a most humble

humble and solemn manner jointly *acknowledge and bewail the manifold Sins and Wickedness, which they from time to time have committed in Thought, Word, and Deed against his Divine Majesty*: Professing themselves *most earnestly to repent of them*; humbly beseeching him to pardon what is past, and to grant them Grace for the future to *serve and please him in Newness of Life*, for Christ Jesus's sake. All which is done with such apposite and pathetical Words, that I do not see how it is possible for us to express our hearty and sincere Repentance better than we do at that time.

While People continue in this humble Posture, begging for Mercy and Grace at the Hands of God, his Minister stands *The Absolution*. up, and in his Name assures them,

that he of his infinite Mercy *hath promised Forgiveness of Sins to all them, that with hearty Repentance and true Faith turn unto him*; and therefore he applies the said Promises to all, and every one there present, praying that Almighty God would accordingly *have Mercy upon them, pardon and deliver them from all their Sins, confirm and strengthen them in all Goodness, and bring them to everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

And here it is that our *Faith* must begin to work, as it is the *Substance of Things hoped for*, or a solid and substantial Confidence that God will give us all the good Things which he hath promised, and therefore hope for at his Hands, so as firmly and stedfastly to believe, that upon our hearty and sincere *Repentance*, we are now *absolved* from all our former Sins, and that from this time forward God will assist us with his Grace, to serve and please him, according to the Prayers we have now put up to him, and the Promises which he hath made to us in our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*: For all the Benefits of *Absolution*, as pronounced by the Minister, depends wholly upon this, our believing in the Promises and Word of God, upon which it is grounded.

Which therefore that we may do, the Minister presently reads some select *Sentences* of the Holy Scriptures, wherein

God hath promised or declared his Willingness to *pardon* and *absolve* us from our Sins, in the Blood of his Son, that so we may act our *Faith* accordingly upon them. And therefore he calls upon the People to hear, and take special Notice of them.

As first, Those comfortable Words which our Saviour saith to all that truly turn to him, *Come unto me all that travel, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you*, Mat. xi. 28. Which Words contain so firm and solid a Foundation, whereupon to build our most *Holy Faith*, that if we be but truly penitent, we cannot doubt of God's Mercy to us. For here his only Son, with his own Divine Mouth, *invites* all that are so, to come to him, promising or engaging his Word, that he will refresh them : He'll give them Peace in their Minds, Quiet in their Consciences, Rest to their Souls. He'll take care that they shall neither travel nor be heavy laden any longer, with the Burden of their Sins ; For he will refresh them with the Sense of God's Mercy, in the Pardon of all their Faults, and with the Assistance of his Grace, in the mortifying of all their Lusts. *Sin shall no longer have Dominion over them, because they are not now under the Law, but under his Grace*, Rom. vi. 14.

Now these being the Words of Christ, of Truth it self, we may and ought to have a sure Trust and Confidence on them ; so as to be fully persuaded in our Minds, that we being in the Number of those whom he calls, and having obey'd his Call in coming to him, he, according to his Word, will ease us of our Sins, and give us Rest ; especially considering that he himself assures us also with his own Mouth, that God *so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, to the End that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life*, John iii. 16. which Words containing the Substance of the Design of the whole

whole Gospel, pronounced by *Christ* himself, are therefore read in the next place, that we might have occasion to exercise our *Faith* in all of it, and so have no place left for Diffidence, or Doubting. For, seeing the great Reason that moved God to send his Son, was his infinite Love to Mankind; and the only End why he did it, was, *That all who believe in him might not perish, but have everlasting Life*: What can we desire more, to excite and confirm our Faith in him? For *he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, How shall he not with him also freely give us all things*, Rom. viii. 32.

But lest the Sense of our former Sins should be apt to make us *despond*, or *despair* of Mercy, that nothing may be wanting to compleat and strengthen our Faith at this time, there are two other Divine Sentences read; the one of St. Paul, saying, *This is a true saying, and worthy of all Men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. And the other of St. John: *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 John ii. 1. Whereby we are given to understand and believe, that Christ came into the World on purpose to save such Sinners as we are; that he was made a *Propitiation* for our Sins, by undergoing all the Punishments that are due unto us for them; and that he is now our *Advocate* in Heaven, always interceding for us, and ready to apply the Merits of his Death unto us. At the hearing of which our Faith hath so much Ground and Matter to work upon, that we may well say with St. Paul, *Who shall lay anything to the Charge of GOD's Elect? It is GOD that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the Right-hand of GOD, who also maketh Intercession for us*, Rom. viii. 33.

Having thus exercised our Faith, and so got above this World, we are now ready to go into the other, and to join with the glorified Saints and Angels in praising and adoring that God, who hath done so great things

things for us; which that we may the better do, the Minister calls upon us to *lift up our Hearts*, to lift them up as high as we can, by a quick and lively Faith in the most High God, the supreme Governour of the whole World. Which being now ready to do, we immediately answer: *We lift them up unto the Lord*. And our Hearts being now all lift up together, and so in a right Posture to celebrate the

The Lauds and Anthems. high Praises of God, the Minister invites all to join with him in doing it, so as at the same time to

believe that he is our LORD, and our God, saying, *Let us give Thanks unto our LORD GOD*. Which the People having consented to, and approved of, by saying, *It is meet and right so to do*; He turns himself to the Lord's Table, and acknowledgeth to his Divine Majesty, there specially present, that *It is very meet, right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times, and in all Places, give Thanks to him*. And then the Minister looking upon himself, and the rest of the Communicants, as Members of the Church triumphant, and all apprehending themselves by Faith, as in the midst of that Blessed Society, we join with them in singing forth the Praises of the most High God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, saying, *Therefore with Angels, and Arch-Angels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy Glorious Name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord GOD of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O LORD most High*. And certainly, if ever our Souls be in Heaven while our Bodies are upon Earth, it must be in the singing of this heavenly Anthem, when our Spirits, *with those of just Men made perfect*, yea, with the whole Company of Heaven, in so solemn and seraphick a manner, adore and magnify the eternal GOD, our Maker and Redeemer. Especially when we celebrate the *Nativity*, the *Resurrection*, and *Ascension* of our Blessed Lord, his *Mission of the Holy Ghost*, or the most glorious *Trinity*: for which there

there are proper *Prefaces* appointed, to raise up our Hearts as high as possible in praising God for such transcendent Mysteries and Mercies as those are.

The Preface.

Now, if ever, our Minds must needs be duly prepared to receive this Blessed *Body* and *Blood* of our dear Lord. And therefore the *Minister* having first acknowledged our Unworthiness of so great a Mercy, and prayed to God to assist with his own Grace to receive it worthily, *The Prayer of Consecration.* he then saith the *Prayer of the*

And now there is nothing either seen, or said, or done, but what puts us in mind of something or other, whereupon to employ and exercise our *Faith* in the highest manner that we can.

When we see the *Bread* and *Wine* set apart for *Consecration*, it minds us of God's Eternal Purpose and determinate Council, to offer up his Son as a *Sacrifice* for the Sins of the World.

The *Minister's* reading the *Prayer of Consecration*, and performing that whole Work alone, none of the People speaking a Word, or any way assisting him in it, may put us in mind how the whole Work of our Salvation was accomplished by Christ alone, no meer Creature contributed any thing at all towards it; and therefore we should believe in him as our only Mediator and Advocate.

When we hear those Words *Who in the same Night that he was betrayed, took Bread*; we are then by *Faith* to behold our Lord at his last Supper there instituting this *Sacrament* which we are now to receive, and distributing it to his *Apostles* with his own most Blessed Hands.

When we see the *Bread broken*, we should then call to mind that Grief and Pain, those bitter Agonies and Passions which the Eternal Son of God suffered for our Sins, and in our stead; how *he was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities*; how his Blessed Body was broken, his Hands and Feet fastened

stened to the Cross, with Nails drove through them, and all for our Sins, even for ours.

And so when the *Minister* takes the *Cup* into his Hands, or *pours out* the *Wine*, we are then by *Faith* to behold how fast the *Blood* trickled down from our dear Lord our Saviour's Head, when crown'd with Thorns; from his Hands and Feet, when nailed to the Cross; from his Side, when pierced with the Spear; and from his whole Body, when he was in his Agony: and all to wash away our Sins: Still believing that it was for our Sins that all this precious Blood was shed: For such and such Sins which we know every one our selves to have been guilty of.

When we hear the *Words of Consecration* repeated, as they came from our Lord's own Mouth, *This is my Body which is given for you, and this is my Blood which is shed for you, and for many, for the Remission of Sins*; we are then stedfastly to believe, that altho' the Substance of the *Bread* and *Wine* still remain, yet now it is not *common* Bread and Wine, as to its Use; but the *Body* and *Blood* of Christ in that *Sacramental* Sense, wherein he spake the Words: 'Inasmuch that
' whosoever duly receives these his Creatures of *Bread*
' and *Wine*, according to Christ's Holy Institution, in
' Remembrance of his Death and Passion, are Parta-
' kers of his most precious Body and Blood; as it is expressed in the Prayer of *Consecration*.

When we see the Minister *distributing* the *Sacramental Bread and Wine* to the several Communicants, we are then by *Faith* to look upon our Lord as offering his Blessed Body and Blood, and all the Benefits of his Death, to all that will receive them at his Hands; entertaining our selves, all the while others are receiving, with these or such like Meditations.

Meditations before the Communion.

BEhold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World! Behold the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, who loved us, and gave himself for us!

us! who himself bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, and washed us from them in his own Blood. See how willing and ready he is to communicate the Blessings he hath thereby purchased! How desirous that all would partake of them! Methinks I hear him crying out, Come unto me all ye that travel, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Methinks I see him yonder going about by his Minister, from one to another, and offering his most Blessed Body and Blood, with all the Merits of his most precious Death, to all that will receive them faithfully. Happy, Thrice happy are they who do so! They are absolved from all their Sins, and accounted righteous before God. They are delivered from the Wrath to come, by the Blood of the Lamb, as the Israelites were by that which was typically sprinkled upon their Door-Posts. They are reconciled to the great Creator and Governor of all Things, and are made his Children by Adoption and Grace. They are always safe and secure under his Care and Protection, and never want any thing that is really good for them. They have his Son always interceding for them, and his Spirit always abiding with them, to direct and assist them in what they do. They are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our GOD, (1 Cor. vi. 11.) and therefore they will be glorified with him for ever. O that I might be in the Number of those Blessed Souls! When will it once be? When will my Lord and Saviour come to me, that I also may partake of his most Blessed Body and Blood! My Heart is ready, O Lord, my Heart is ready to receive it. My Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh also longeth after thee. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Thus we may employ our Thoughts while others are receiving; but when it comes to our Turn to receive it, then we are to lay aside all Thoughts of Bread, and Wine, and Minister, and every thing else that is or can be seen, and fix our Faith, as it is the Evidence of Things not seen, wholly and solely upon our Blessed Saviour, as offering us his own Body and Blood to preserve

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our *Body* and *Souls* to everlasting Life, which we are therefore to receive *by Faith*, as it is *the Substance of things hoped for*, stedfastly believing it to be as our Saviour said, *his Body and Blood*; which, as our Church teacheth us, *are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper*. By which means, whatsoever it is to others, it will be to us, who receive it with such a *Faith*, the *Body and Blood of Christ* our Saviour, the very *Substance of things hoped for*, upon the account of his *Body* that was broken, and his *Blood* that was shed for us.

And the better to excite and assist us in the Exercise of our *Faith* after this manner,

The actual receiving. at our receiving the *Holy Sacrament*, the Minister, at the distribution of it, first applies the Merits of Christ's Death to each particular Person that receives it, saying to every one singly, and by himself, *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which was given for THEE, and the *Blood which was shed for THEE*, preserve THY *Body and Soul* to everlasting Life; that so I may apply and appropriate it to my self as the *Body and Blood of him* that loved ME, and gave himself for ME, to preserve MY *Body and MY Soul* to everlasting Life. And then he adds at the Distribution of the Bread, *Take, and eat this in Remembrance that Christ died for THEE, and feed on Him in thy Heart by Faith with Thanksgiving*. Whereby I am put in mind again to eat it in Remembrance that Christ died for ME in particular, and then am taught how to feed upon Him, even in my Heart by *Faith, with Thanksgiving*. In my Heart, because it is not Bodily, but *Spiritual Food*: By *Faith*, as the only Means whereby the Heart or Soul can take in its proper Nourishment, and receive *the Substance of things hoped for*, even the *Body and Blood of Christ*; and then it must be with *Thanksgiving* too, as the necessary consequent of *Faith*. For as no Man can be truly thankful to Christ, unless he actually believe in him; so no Man can actually believe in him, but he must needs be truly thankful both to, and for him.

him. And therefore at the Distribution of the Cup, after the Words, *Drink this in Remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee*, it is only added, *And be thou thankful*. Because this necessarily supposeth and implyeth our *feeding upon* him in our Hearts by *Faith*, as without which it is impossible for us to be truly thankful.

Hence also it is that our Church requires us to receive the Holy Sacrament *kneeling*, not out of any *Respect* to the *Upon our Knees.*
the Creatures of *Bread and Wine*, but to put us in mind that Almighty God, our Creator and Redeemer, the only *Object* of all *Religious Worship*, is there specially present, offering his own Body and Blood to us, that so we may act our *Faith* in him, and express our Sense of his Goodness to us, and our Unworthiness of it, in the most humble Posture that we can. And indeed, could the *Church* be sure that all her Members would *receive*, as they ought, with *Faith*, she need not command them to receive it *kneeling*. For they could not do it any other way. For how can I pray in *Faith* to Almighty God to preserve both my Body and Soul to everlasting Life, and not make my *Body* as well as *Soul* bow down before him? How can I by *Faith* behold my Saviour coming to me, and offering me his own Body and Blood, and not *fall down* and *worship* him? How can I by *Faith* lay hold upon the Pardon of my Sins, as there sealed and delivered to me, and receive it any otherwise than upon my *Knees*? I dare not, I cannot do it! And they who can, have too much Cause to suspect that they do not *discern the Lord's Body*, and therefore cannot receive it *worthily*. Be sure our receiving the Blessed *Body and Blood of Christ*, as the Catholic Church always did, in an humble and adoring Posture, is both an Argument and Excitement of our *Faith in him*. By it we demonstrate, that we *discern the Lord's Body*, and believe him to be present with us in a peculiar *Sacramental Sense*. And by it we excite and stir up both our selves and others to act our *Faith*
more

more stedfastly upon him, in that by our *adoring* him we actually acknowledge him to be *GOD* as well as Man; and therefore on whom we have all the reason in the World to believe and trust for our Salvation.

When we have thus Spiritually *eaten the Flesh of Christ, and drank his Blood*, then we are firmly to believe, and rest fully satisfied in our Minds, that according to his own Word, *Christ now dwelleth in us, and we in him*, that *Christ is one with us, and we with him*: And therefore that *GOD* hath now sealed to us the Pardon of our Sins in his Blood, and will enable us for the future to *walk in Holiness and Righteousness before him all our Days*. Which *Faith*, together with our Thankfulness for so great a Mercy, we ought to exercise all the while that the rest of the Communicants are receiving; not suffering our Thoughts to wander up and down, but keeping them as close up as we can to the Work, still ruminating upon that Spiritual Food which we have eaten, after this, or the like manner.

Ejaculations and Resolutions after the Communion,

Praise thou the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy Name. Praise thou the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits, Psal. ciii.
 1, 2. Behold, *GOD* is my Salvation, I will trust and not be afraid. For the *LORD* Jehovah is my Strength and my Song: He also is become my Salvation, Isai. xii.
 2. He himself, by the one Oblation of himself once offered, hath made a full, perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World: And he hath now given me a share in it. For he hath communicated unto me that Body and Blood where-with he did it, and hath assured me thereby of his Favour and Goodness towards me, in the Pardon of all my Sins, and that I am a Member incorporate in his Mystical Body, and an Heir, through Hope, of that Everlasting Kingdom, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.
 What shall I render unto the Lord for these his most inestimable

inestimable Benefits? I will offer and present my self, my Soul and Body to be a reasonable holy, and lively Sacrifice unto him. I will believe in him, I will trust in him, I will love and honour him with all my Heart and Soul. I will spend the rest of my Days wholly in his Service, and to his Glory. I will order all my Conversation as becometh his Gospel; I will crucifie the Flesh; I will resist the Devil; I will keep my self unspotted from the World; I will abstain from all appearance of Evil, and do all such good Works as he hath prepared for me to walk in. For his Grace shall be sufficient for me, his Strength shall be made perfect in my Weakness, his Power shall rest upon me, his Holy Spirit shall abide continually with me, and in me, to direct, sanctifie and govern both my Heart and Body in the ways of his Laws, and in the Works of his Commandments; so that now, through his most mighty Protection, I shall be preserved both in Soul and Body to everlasting Life. Amen. Hallelujah, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power be unto the Lord our God, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

Now when all have communicated with the same humble Confidence, we jointly address our selves to Almighty God as our Heavenly Father, in that Divine Form of Prayer, which he, whose Body and Blood we have now received, was pleased to compose, and require us to use upon all Occasions. After which, having added another Prayer proper for this great and solemn Occasion, we join together in singing or saying that incomparable Hymn,

The Proper Hymn.

Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorifie thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only begotten Son Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest

kest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the World, have mercy upon us. Thon that takest away the sins of the World, receive our prayer. Thou that fittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only, O Christ, with the holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*

The first part whereof was sung by the Choir of Heaven, at our *Lord's Nativity*, and the rest added by the *Primitive*, if not by the *Apostolick Church*, it being the most *ancient Hymn*, that we know of, and that which hath been generally used both by *Greek* and *Latine Churches* all along, from the Beginning of *Christianity*. And this is the most proper place for it. Now that our Hearts are strengthened and refreshed by the *Body* and *Blood* of Christ, and so ready to sing and give praise in the best manner that we can ever do it upon Earth. But for that purpose it will be necessary to keep our Minds all the while intent, and our *Faith* still fixed upon God the Father Almighty, and upon his only begotten Son *Jesus Christ*, to whom we here speak in a particular manner, and therefore should look upon him as specially present with us, hearing what we say to him, and observing how earnestly we beseech him, the *Lamb of God*, the *Son of the Father*, who takest away the Sins of the World, to have Mercy upon us, and how heartily we adore and magnifie his Divine Holiness, his absolute Dominion over the whole World, and his, together with the Holy Spirit's, *infinite Height* in the Glory of the Father.

After all which duly perform'd, having prayed for God's acceptance of what we have done, and for his *Blessing* upon us, we are accordingly dismissed, as well we may, with the *Peace of God which passeth all Understanding*, and with the *Blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, which will most certainly be and remain, with those who thus receive the *Holy Communion*, always.

I have now gone over the whole *Communion-Ser-vice*, taking Notice by the way of such things only, as are plain and obvious in the several Parts of it. From whence it is easie to observe, that it is all contrived so; as to set before us continual Matter for our Faith to work upon, before, as well as at the receiving the Holy Sacrament; that our Faith having been kept so long in Exercise upon our Blessed Saviour beforehand, it may be more ready to be fixed upon him in the actual receiving the Holy Communion, so as that we may partake of his most Blessed Body and Blood, which otherwise we could not: For without our Faith, as it is impossible to please GOD, so it is impossible to partake of Christ. And therefore not only Infidels, who have no Faith at all, but they also who have Faith, unless they use it at the Holy Sacrament, they can only receive the outward Part, or Sign of the Lord's Supper; they cannot possibly partake of his Body and Blood signified by it: For that cannot be so much as discerned, much less received any other way than by Faith. And that is the reason why so many go from the Holy Sacrament no better than they came to it: Because, while they are there, they either stare about them, or think of other things, at least they do not keep their Minds and Faith intent upon the Work they are about. They feed only upon the Bread and Wine with their Mouths, they do not feed upon Christ in their Hearts by Faith; and therefore cannot possibly receive any Spiritual Strength or Refreshment from him. Whereas, if whilst they are eating and drinking the outward Element, they would at the same time lift up their Hearts, and fix their Faith upon that which is signified and represented by them, their Souls would be much more strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ, than their Bodies are by the Bread and Wine.

From hence it appears, both how little reason any can have to plead their unprofitableness under it, as an Argument for their not frequenting the Holy Sacra-

Exhortation to frequent Communion,
ment,

from the Benefit and Comfort of it. *ment, and like wise how we may receive it, so as to be always the better for it.* But for that purpose it is requisite that we do it often: For the oftner we do it, the more expert we shall be at it, and the more *Benefit and Comfort* we shall receive from it. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for those who do it only now and then, (as once or twice a Year) ever to do it as they ought: For every time they come to it, they must begin as it were again; all the Impressions, which were made upon their Minds at the last *Sacrament*, being worn out before the next: And it being a thing they are not accustomed to, they are as much to seek how to do it now, as if they had never done it before. It is by frequent Acts that Habits are produced. It is by often eating and drinking this Spiritual Food, that we learn how to do it, so as to digest and convert it into proper Nourishment for our Souls. And therefore I do not wonder that they, who do it seldom, never do it as they ought, nor by Consequence get any good by it: I should rather wonder if they did. But let any Man do it often, and always according to the Directions before laid down, and my Life for his, he shall never lose his Labour; but, whether he perceives it or not, he will grow in Grace, and gather Spiritual Strength every time more and more.

If such Considerations as these will not prevail upon Men, to lay aside their little Excuses for the Neglect of so great a Duty, and to resolve for the future upon the more constant Performance of it; for my part I know not what will: And therefore shall say no more, but that I never expect to see our Church settled, Primitive Christianity reviv'd, and true Piety and Virtue flourish again among us, till the Holy Communion be oftner celebrated, than it hath been of late, in all Places of the Kingdom: And am sure, that if People were but sensible of the great Advantage it would be to them, they would need no other Arguments to persuade 'em to frequent it as often as they can. For we should soon find, as many have done already, by
Experience

Experience, that this is the great means appointed by our ever blessed Redeemer, whereby to communicate himself, and all the Merits of his most precious Death and Passion to us, for the Pardon of all our Sins, and for the *Purging our Consciences from dead Works to serve the Living GOD*. So that by applying our selves thus constantly unto him, we may receive constant Supplies of Grace and Power from him, to live in his true Faith and Fear all our Days; and by conversing so frequently with him at his Holy Table upon Earth, we shall be always fit and ready to go to him, and to converse perpetually with him in his Kingdom above, where we shall have no need of Sacraments, but shall see him *face to face*, and adore and praise him for Ever; as for all his other Blessings, so particularly for the many Opportunities he hath given us, of partaking of his most blessed Body and Blood.





PRIVATE DEVOTIONS

*Preparatory to the SACRAMENT, or on any
Days of Humiliation.*

I.

O Blessed Jesu! I confess that I have nothing to plead for my self before Thee. I adore and magnifie thy Name, that thou vouchsafed'st to suffer for my Sins; but I loath, I abhor my self before Thee, that I have not as yet sufficiently loathed and abhorr'd my Sins, for which thou wast pleased to suffer. I humbly crave thy pardon for what is past, and for the future, beseech Thee to endow me with that measure of thy Grace and holy Spirit, that as thou wast pleased to offer up they self for me, so I may offer up my self wholly unto Thee, as I desire to do this Day:

II.

O H! the Breadth, the Length, the Depth, the Height of the Love of God in Jesus Christ my Lord! Who is able to comprehend it? Who can but admire and adore it? that ever the Almighty Creator of the World should have so much Love and Pity for me, his sinful Creature, upon Earth, as to send his only begotten Son to die, to die upon the Cross, and all for us, and for our Sins, against Himself. Ungrateful Wretch that I am! that ever I should commit such Sins against him, which nothing less, than the Blood of his beloved Son, could expiate? Oh that my Head were Water, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night, and this Day especially, that ever we should be the Occasion that the Son of God should die! and wherefore did he die? To save Sinners? Then he died to save me, the chiefest of all Sinners.

Sinners. Why then should I despair of Salvation, who have got such an all-sufficient Saviour as this is? one *who is able to save, to the utmost, all that come to God* by him. By him therefore I will go to God; I will believe in him, I will put my whole Trust and Confidence on him, both to be cleansed from my Sins, and justified before God by him.

III.

O Blessed Jesu! who once suffered Death upon the Cross, and art now at the right Hand of thy Father in Heaven interceding for us; my Eyes are up to Thee, all my Hopes and Expectations are from Thee. Send down thy holy Spirit, I beseech Thee, into my Heart, to work in me true Repentance, to open mine Eyes, to turn me from Darkness to Light, and *from the Power of Satan* unto God. Blessed Lord, my Saviour! I know thou hearest me, and believe thou wilt, according to thy Promise, grant my Request; thou wilt give me thy holy Spirit, whereby I shall mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, and walk for the future in all thy Commandments blameless. I can now *do all Things through Christ which strengthneth me.*

IV.

DE A R Jesus! thou *Lamb of God, who takest away the Sin of the World!* I honour Thee, I adore Thee, I love Thee, for that thou first lovedst me, yea, so lovedst me, as to give thy self for me: what shall I render to Thee, most loving Saviour, for this thine infinite Love and Kindness to me? I know that thou expectest no more, and I can give no less, than to love Thee again. This therefore is that which I now promise, and resolve to do by thy Assistance; beseeching Thee to inspire and inflame my Heart every Day more and more with Love to Thee above all Things, by that transcendent Love, which thou hast, and still art pleased to manifest unto me.

Private

Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanks, and Honour and Power be unto our God, and unto the Lamb for evermore. *Amen.*

Whilst others are coming up, and the Priest preparing to read the Sentences.

A Lmighty Lord, who hast of thine infinite Mercies vouchsafed to ordain this Sacrament, for a perpetual Memory of that Blessed Sacrifice, which once thou madest for us upon the Cross; grant me, with such due Reverence, to participate of this so holy and wonderful a Mystery, that I may be made worthy by thy Grace, to obtain the Virtue and Fruits of the same, with all the Benefits of thy precious Death and Passion, even the Remission of all my Sins, and the Fulness of all thy Graces, which I beg for thy only Merits, who art my only Saviour, God from Everlasting, and World without end. *Amen.*

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, regard, we beseech thee, the Devotions of thy humble Servants, who do now celebrate the Memorial, which thy Son and our Saviour hath commanded to be made in Remembrance of his most blessed Passion and Sacrifice; that by the Merits and Powers thereof, now represented before thy Divine Majesty, we, and all thy whole Church, may be made Partakers of all other the Benefits of his most precious Death and Resurrection from the Earth, and glorious Ascension into Heaven, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, World without End. *Amen.*

BE pleased, O God, to accept this our bounden Duty and Service, and command that the Prayers and Supplications, together with the Remembrance of Christ's Passion, which we do now offer up unto thee, may, by the Ministry of the holy Angels, be brought up into thy heavenly Tabernacle; and that thou,
not

not weighing our Merits, but looking upon the blessed Sacrifice of our Saviour, which was once fully and perfectly made for us all, may'st pardon our Offences, and replenish us with thy Grace and Heavenly Benediction, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

At the Offertory.

Blessed Jesu, who didst accept the poor Widow's two Mites, be pleased graciously to accept this from thy unworthy Servant. *Amen.*

At the Consecration.

O Blessed Jesu, in the Bread broken, I call to Mind thy Body torn with Whips, and Thorns, and Nails; and in the Wine poured out, I call to Mind thy precious Blood, shed for my Sins!

Glory be to thee, O Lamb of God, that didst offer thy self a Sacrifice, to take away the Sins of the World; Lord have Mercy on me, and take away mine also. *Amen.*

O Lord God, how I receive the Body and Blood of my most blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, the Price of my Redemption, is the very Wonder of my Soul! yet grant me, gracious Lord, so to eat the Flesh of thy Son, and drink his Blood, that my sinful Body may be made clean by his Body, and my Soul washed through his most precious Blood. *Amen.*

When the Priest draws near with the Elements.

Blessed be thy Name, O Lord, that I was born in a Christian Land, and admitted to thy Church by Baptism, and have lived to a Capacity of Sealing my Baptismal Vows in my own Person: Lord, I heartily take those Engagements upon my self: I renounce all Sins, the Works of the Devil, all worldly Vanities, and sensual Lusts: I heartily believe thy Holy Religion, and
sincerely

sincerely profess constantly to endeavour to obey thy Laws; and earnestly implore the Assistance of thy Grace and Spirit, to enable me to keep these Resolutions, through Jesus Christ my Lord. *Amen.*

Immediately before receiving the Holy Bread.

Thou hast said, *That he that eateth thy Flesh, and drinketh thy Blood, hath Eternal Life.*

Behold the Servant of the Lord, be it unto me, according to thy Word!

At the eating of the Holy Bread.

By thy crucified Body, deliver me from this Body of Death.

After Receiving.

By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat, by thy Cross and Passion, Good Lord deliver me! *I have sworn and am stedfastly purposed to keep thy Righteous Judgments.*

O, hold thou up my going in thy Paths, that my Footsteps slip not.

LORD, I receive this broken Bread, the Representation of thy Body, in Memory of thy wonderful Incarnation, and meritorious Sufferings; and vow by it, that I will, by the Grace of God, persist in the stedfast Faith of thy most excellent Religion, and sincere Obedience to thy most Holy Laws to my Life's End. *Amen,*

LORD, I believe, help my Unbelief. I take this Sign of thy Body, as a Token of thy Love, and Seal of thy Promises, to obtain for me the Pardon of my Sins, and the Salvation of my Soul, upon the Terms of Faith, and new Obedience: Lord, I stand to my Part of the Covenant, and in full Assurance of Faith, I rely on thee for the Accomplishment of thine: Be it unto me according to thy Word. *Amen.*

GRANT, O Lord, that this Bread of Life, received by me in stedfast Faith and humble Thankfulness, may refresh and nourish my Soul, and be an effectual

effectual Means of the Growth of my Grace, and Increase of my Comforts, 'till I come to Life everlasting; through Jesus Christ my Lord. *Amen.*

I Believe, O Blessed Jesus, that thou art the Lord of Heaven and Earth; the Prince of Life, and the King of Glory. I most heartily thank thee, that thou wast pleased to stoop so low, as to visit us poor Dust and Ashes, yea, vile and miserable Sinners. Blessed be thy Goodness, which moved thee to do a great deal more; to humble thy self to the Death, even the Death of the Cross, that we might be lifted up to immortal Life. I devote my self everlastingly to thy Love and Obedience: I consent to all thy Holy Gospel, desiring that all the Dwellers upon Earth would praise and serve thee. Let all Nations come and worship before thee: Let all Generations call thee Blessed; and shew forth thy dying Love, while the Sun and Moon endure; to the Glory of God the Father. *Amen, Amen.*

Before receiving the Cup,

LORD, I remember, with all Humility and Gratitude, the Effusion of thy precious Blood for me, and the Attonement made by it: Grant me such a Sense of those Sufferings, as may awaken a due Abhorrence of my Sins; and such an Apprehension of that Propitiation, as may encourage my Addressees to the Throne of Mercy for Pardon and Peace; and quicken my Endeavours in the Ways of Repentance and Holy Living, 'till I obtain the Blessings thou hast purchased by thy Merits, and promised in thy Gospel. *Amen.*

Upon the Approach of the Priest with the consecrated Cup.

What Reward shall I give unto the Lord, for all the Benefits he hath done unto me? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

After Receiving the Cup.

O My God, thou art true and holy! O my Soul, thou art blessed and happy! O the Depth of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his Judgments,

Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me praise his Holy Name: Who saveth thy Life from Destruction, and feedeth thee with the Bread of Heaven! Glory be to God on high, and on Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men. I worship thee, O Lord, and magnifie thy Name for ever, who hast vouchsafed to fill my Soul with Gladness, and to feed me with the heavenly Mysteries of Christ's Sacred Body and Blood, humbly beseeching thee, that from henceforth I may walk in good Works, and serve thee in Holiness and Pureness of Living, to the Honour of thy Name. *Amen.*

MOST blessed Redeemer, I do truly believe that thy Body was crucified, and thy Blood was shed out of thy Body, as verily as I have received this Bread, and this Wine set apart from the Bread: And that for the Remission of my Sins, as well as any others: And I do also believe, that with this Bread and Wine, I have really and spiritually receiv'd thy precious Body and Blood, whereby my Sins are fully washed away, and my Soul purify'd and refreshed: This, O Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief. *Amen.*

After receiving in both Kinds.

ALL Glory, and Praise, and Adoration be given to thee, O Lord, for all thy Benefits, especially for thy Son! For his Life and Death, Resurrection and Ascension; for his Doctrine, and for his Example; for the Appointment of this memorial Feast; for thy gracious Invitation of poor Sinners to thy Table; and for thy admitting me, the unworthiest of them, to partake of thy spiritual Dainties. Let me never forget this Love, or cease to remember this, dear Lord; but carry the Thoughts of him, and it, into all my Affairs, that they may regulate and direct the Actions of my Life to the promoting of his Honour, and expressing my Acknowledgment of his Goodness; that so at last I may partake of his Glory, and enjoy the full Manifestation of his Love, thro' his Merits and Mediation, in his heavenly and everlasting Kingdom. *Amen.*

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O Lord,

O Lord, I have now once more, in Confidence of thy gracious Assistance, enter'd into a solemn Resolution against my Sins, to be more watchful over my Ways, and to have more Regard unto thy Laws. I most humbly and penitently implore thy Pardon for my manifold Breaches of such sacred Vows; those at Baptism, and others since at thy Table: And now earnestly beseech thee to afford me such Measures of that Grace, which thy Son hath purchased and promis'd, as may be sufficient to strengthen my natural Weakness, and to overcome my powerful Temptations; that I may serve thee acceptably and faithfully all the Days of my Life, through Jesus Christ my Saviour. *Amen.*

O Lord, thou hast sealed to me the Covenant of thy Grace, made to me in and through thy Son, and assured me of thy Forgiveness of my Sins, the Power of thy Grace, the Light of thy Countenance, and the Enjoyment of thy Love, upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance. Lord, I most submissively praise thy divine Majesty for this Grace, and wonderful Condescension, in entering into Covenant with such a worthless Sinner; I for ever love and adore thy blessed Son, my dear Saviour, for the Merits of his Life and Death, by which he hath satisfied thy Justice, and procured this gracious Covenant. Help me, O Lord, to abound more and more in Acts of devout Praise, and holy Love; and to give constant Heed to the diligent and sincere Performance of those reasonable Conditions which thou hast required, and I have accepted, and engaged to fulfil: That I may obtain the Effects of thy gracious Promises, through Jesus Christ my Lord. *Amen.*

At the End of the Communion.

TO the King Eternal, the Immortal, Invisible, and only wise God, the ever blessed Trinity, be all Honour and Glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



